

GRAND

*Thomas*  
*his* *book*

Truth and

*Many* *Books*

DIFFERENT

*and* *HERE*

The summe and substance of

*Q. A. XV*

SERMONS

Preached by that faithful and godly Minister of  
 F E S S C H I R C H

Mr. CHRISTOPHER LOR

Late Minister of *St. Dunstons Church*  
 They being his last Sermons

To which is added a *Postscript*  
 last Sermon

*The Kingdom of heaven is like a grain of wheat sown in his field, which maketh a great increase: but while the wheat is growing, the tares also grow up with it: and the Son of Man shall come and gather the wheat into his barn, and the tares he will gather out, and cast them into a burning fire, and there shall they be tormented.*

London, Printed for J. B. at the Golden Ball in St. Dunstons Church, and for J. W. at the Black Swan in Old Bailey.

Mary Barstoll Howard  
books good giving hand given  
them in the book 1686  
Mary Barstoll 1869

DIFFERENT DEGREES  
THE REOF. 1669  
The name and substance of

X V  
MONS

... the first ... of ...  
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# To the Christian READER.



His purpose in publishing this small Treatise, is not so make old sores bleed, or foment any ones discontent, or renew any ones grief, concerning the much lamented death of this godly and Reverend Author, nor shall we mention what great losse the Church of God had in the death of so usefull and hopefull a Minister. But we shall in a few words acquaint thee why this little Piece is thus made publick.

There are many imperfect Copies of Mr. Love's Sermons, which are likely to be obruded into the world, by some who regard no other end in publishing and printing books, then their own private gain. To prevent which, we have from his own notes published these Sermons, and shall desire the Reader to take notice, That whatever Sermons of this Author shall be thought fit to be published, shall be attested with some of our hands who are intrusted with his Papers, and hope none will be so injurious to the Author and others, as to presume to print any thing of Mr. Love's without the said Attestation.

Thou hast here but the marrow & substance of the last Sermons, preached by this late faithful Servant of God, Ralph

## To the Reader.

repetitions and enlargements are here omitted, we having in-  
deavour'd to accommodate them well in the price in buying,  
and in the price in reading. And thou might'st have much  
fruit, though there be not many leaves. These books are best,  
that have much worth and little in a little bulk, and such  
is this, if we will take note.

The Reverend Author, though he had not attained many  
years, yet he had gotten much experience about Soul-affairs.  
These were his Last Meditations, and therefore the more desi-  
red by, and we hope will be the more acceptable to those, to  
whose souls his Ministry was profitable & precious. Thou wilt  
finde here no new, uncomon, and unscriptural expressions, but  
plain practical Doctrine, old Divinity, sound solid & consola-  
tance-searching truths. The gracious Author presseth and  
pressing them on the hearts of his hearers, from his own expe-  
rience of them. Neither wilt thou meet with any railing or  
reproachings of the publick and present Governours, (the  
usual, though the most unjust charge against the Presbyterian  
Ministers.) This whole discourse is not about State, but  
Soul-affairs, which is another reason why it is published, to  
check the licentiousnesse of this Age, which hath surfeited  
upon absurd and unprofitable Pamphlets: The Lord give  
thee to have thy spiritual senses exercised to discern both  
good and evill. But alas! What between State-mutations  
and Church-diffentions, spiritual truths lie by neglected.  
It is much to be feared the Work of Grace goes on but slow-  
ly, few inquire into their Soul-state. But to inquire into our  
spiritual estate is the best husbandry in the world. If we are  
to be diligent to know the state of our flocks, then surely we  
should give all diligence to know how it is with our precious  
and immortal souls. The benefit & profit of this soul-searching  
will abundantly recompense our pains & care in performing it.

There

*Lib. 7. v. 11. m.  
non verborum  
sed sensus.*

Heb. 5. 14.

Prov. 27. 23.

## To the Reader.

There are two great mistakes, to which the best of Christians are very subject.

1. Either to despise and disparage the Work of grace, if their measures be small.
2. Or else if their attainments be somewhat considerable, to sit down contented with their acquired measures.

We beseech you, take heed of both these evils, which are both alike, unthankfulness to God, and injuriousness to your own soul, the one despiseth the truth, and the other neglects the Growth of Grace.

1. If thou art one of the tender Plants in Christs Orchard, a weak Lamb in his Flock, a Babe in his Family, yet Oh despise not the day of small things in thy soul, though thy gifts be few, and thy comforts fewer, yet tread not out thy self the smoking flax; stay thy self upon his name who is a rock of ages, and whose work is perfect, and his grace unchangeable, who will bring forth judgement unto victory. Slight not the least measure of grace: though the first & tender draught be but drawn on thy soul, yet be comforted in this, that the image of Christ is begun to be renewed there. But be sure thy grace be right. Temporary faith, partial obedience, mercenary love, pretended zeal, legal sorrow, feigned humility may make up a lifeless picture of a Professor, who hath the form, without the power of godliness: but it is true Grace that makes a true Christian. Common gifts & graces may bring a man neer heaven, but they will never bring a man into heaven. This Treatise therefore will teach thee to bring thy grace to the true touch-stone. It is one of the saddest considerations that can settle on the heart of a Christian, to think how high a formall hyppocrite may go towards heaven with his seeming grace, and how low a true childe of God may fall by sin towards hell, and yet have real Grace.

## To the Reader.

Grace. It is a dreadful thing to think how many Professors in our age rest in duties performed, and pains acquired, & never examine themselves whether they are in the faith, and have attained that true Grace, which reprobates and hypocrites can never have. When we finde in Scripture, a Cain sacrificing, b Pharaoh confessing his sin, c Ahab fasting d Saul weeping, e Jehu reforming, f Judas repenting and restoring, g Simon Magus believing, h Herod rejoycing, and i Felix trembling at the Word, and yet not one of these had one dram of true Grace. How careful should we then be to examine and prove our selves whether we are in a state of true grace? Oh! it is very sad to fall short of them that fall short of heaven. As for the most part of Professors of our times, it is much to be feared, that their spiritual trading lies more for the increase of gifts and parts, (in which their Religion consists,) then for Grace, which is the true reason why we have so little truth and peace amongst us: for parts puffe up the minde, pride begets contention, and contention increaseth error. Former times had lesse gifts but more Grace, lesse knowledge and more conscience.

2 If thou art one of those, that upon good Scripture-grounds canst say thou hast the truth of Grace, labour then after Growth in Grace. Oh labour, that whilst others are joyning house to house, and laying field to field, till they be placed alone in the midst of the earth, that you give all diligence to adde to your faith vertue, and to your vertue knowledge, and to your knowledge temperance, and to your temperance patience, and to patience godlinesse, and to godlinesse brotherly-kindnesse, and to brotherly kindenesse charity, that these graces may be in you and abound, that you may be neither barren or unfruitfull in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus.

No

a Gen 4.3.  
b Exod. 9.27.  
c 1 Kings 21.  
27.  
d 1 Sam. 14.16  
e 2 Kings 10.  
16.  
f Math. 27.3.  
g Acts 8.13.  
h Mark 6.20.  
i Acts 24.25.

Plus scientie  
minus conscien-  
tie.

1st. 5.8.

a Pet. 1.6, 7, 8.

To the Reader.

No Christian should content himself with any measures of Grace attained, for he is like a man who use of all the Grace he hath, had he a Benjamins portion. The time is coming when one dram of true Grace will be of more worth then all the world. The comforts of Grace, the joy and peace in believing, will be Cordials to you when you are aying, and will set up such a light in the soul, which the shadow of death shall neither damp nor darken. But alas! most men are labouring, more after wealth then faith, more after greatness in the world then true Grace, of whom when they die it may be said, They had goods laid up for many years; but it cannot be said, In them was found some good thing towards the Lord. Men do usually lay up riches for a dear year, they'l say, they know not what will they may have before they come to die: Be then as wise and provident for your precious souls. Your temptations and trials may be such, that you may have use for all your faith and patience. Eat (said the Angel to Elijah) for the journey is long. It is no short way to heaven; nor is the opposition smal thou shalt meet withall in thy passage thither. O then get thy soul well stored with spiritual Provision of grace, and the comforts of it. It is true, thy safety is in the being, but thy comfort stands in the strength and activity of thy graces. Weak Grace is saving, but strong Grace is comfortable; truth of Grace shall be rewarded with heaven, growth of Grace doth as it were antedate heaven. The least true Grace will bring thee to heaven, but the more Grace thou hast, the fitter for and surer thou wilt be of heaven. The Lord make these and all the labours of his Servants profitable to his Church. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the errour of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastnesse. But grow in Grace, and

Plus valebit  
conscientia  
pa-  
ra quam mar-  
supia plena.

Revel. 13. 10,

1 Kings 19. 7.

2 Pet. 3. 17, 18.



To the Reader.

and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to Him be Glory both now and for ever, Amen.

Reader, we remain

*Ready to serve thee in thy Soul-affairs.*

London, February

13, 1651.

Edmund Calamy.

Simeon Ashe.

Jerem. Whitaker.

William Taylor.



I KINGS 14.

Part of the 13 Verse.

*Because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.*



His Chapter contains in it *Ahijah's* Prophecie, foretelling what dismal judgements should befall *Jeroboam* and his posterity; for his Idolatry in worship, and defection from the Government and house of *David*. For which sins *God* did destroy him and his posterity: and not onely the bad, but the good were punished for their

fathers guilt. For so it is intimated in this Verse, out of which the Text is taken. Here was a young man *Jeroboam's* son that should die for the fathers fault; and yet here was a mitigation of the punishment, that he should not die after the same manner that the rest did, *He shall go to his grave in peace, because in him there is found some good*; &c. Behold the goodness of *God*! a little good in him, and yet the great *God* takes notice of the little good in him. *God* found (as it were) one pearl in a heap of pebbles, one good young man in *Jeroboam's* household, that some good in him rewarded the Lord God of Israel.

In the whole Verse, three parts:

Sermon 1.

At Lawrence  
Jury, London,  
March 9.

1652.

3 Kings 14. 22.



I A lamentation for the death of this son of *Jeroboam*; *It is said, All Israel shall mourn for him, and so they did, verse 18.* — which argued there was goodness in him; for if he had not been desired and prized while he lived, he would not have been so lamented at his death.

II A limitation of his punishment, he only of *Jeroboams* family shall come to the grave, the rest of his posterity that died in the City, dogs should eat, and him that dieth in the field, should the fowls of the air devour, *v. 11.*

III The commendation of his life, *In him was found some good, &c.* (of this I am now to treat.)

He is commended by the Holy Ghost; for his goodness is set forth,

1 By the quality of his goodness; it was a good thing, not a good word only, or a good purpose or inclination, with which too many content themselves; but it was a good action.

2 By the quantity of it; it was but some little good thing that was found in him, and yet that little good God did not despise or over-look.

3 By the sincerity of his goodness; there are two notable demonstrations of this young mans goodness:

1 It was towards the Lord God of Israel.

2 It was in *Jeroboams* house.

1 His goodness was towards the Lord God of Israel. This argued *Pauls* sincerity, that in his speaking, writing and actions he could and did appeal to God. That Religion, saith the Apostle, is pure and undefiled, that is *To before God and the Father.* Many Hypocrites may be good towards men, who are not so towards God; to be rich indeed, is to be rich towards God. True repentance is repentance towards God; and he is unblameable indeed that is void of offence towards God, as well as towards men.

2 He was good in the house of *Jeroboam*. A wicked man may seem good in a good place; but to be good in a bad place argues men to be good indeed. To be good in *Davids* house, this was not so much; but for this young man to be good in the house of *Jeroboam* his father, whom the Scripture brands for his Idolatry, that he made all Israel to sin, and yet could not make his son to sin, this

2 Cor. 13. 19.  
Gal. 1. 10.  
James 1. 27.

Luke 12. 27.  
Acts 10. 27.  
Acts 14. 16.

this argued he was sincerely good : as it did argue *Lots* sincerity to be righteous in *Sodom* ; for *Jeh* to be good in *Chaldea* ; and to be Saints in *Nero's Palace* ; and to fear God in *Jeroboams* family , this is goodness indeed.

There is onely one difficulty in the Text, viz. What was that good thing that was found in *Abijah* ?

For answer to this, 'tis true, the Scripture doth not particularly expresse what that good thing was which was found in him : but *Tostatus* and *Peter Martyr* affirm from the Hebrew Rabbins, that when the Jews of the ten Tribes did on their appointed times repair to *Jerusalem* to worship according to the comand of God, and *Ieroboam* comanded Souldiers to intercept them : this *Abijah* did hinder the souldiers to kill them, and gave them passes to go to *Jerusalem* to worship God, and encouraged them therein, notwithstanding the rage of his father, who had forsaken the true worship of God, and set up Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*.

Others think the goodnesse of this young Prince was in this, that he would not consent to his father in taking away the government from the house of *David* ; but where the Scripture hath not a tongue to speak, we have not an ear to hear, and therefore we shall not undertake to determine what the Scripture hath not determined.

There are many collateral observations which I shall deduce from the severall circumstances in the text, and but name some of them. From the consideration that this good *Abijah* died:

*Good men, and usefull, and hopefull instruments may be taken away by death, when wicked men may live long upon the earth.*

Bad *Jeroboam* lived long, his good sonne died soon; so true is that of *Solomon*, *A righteous man may perish in his righteousness, when a wicked man may prolong his dayes in his wickednesse*; Briars and Thorns and Thistles wither not so soon as Lilies and Roses. They may be taken out of the world, of whom the world is not worthy, and they remain behinde, who are not worthy to live in the world.

2. From the consideration of the death of godly *Abijah*, when wicked *Nadab* the other son of *Ieroboam* lived;—Observe,

1 Observation.

1 Kings 15: 26.

B 2.

That

2 Observa-  
tion.

Thus good children may be taken away by death from their parents, when wicked children may live to be a shame and a curse to their parents.

3 Observa-  
tion.

3 From the consideration of the cause why this gracious young man died so soon, it was for his fathers sins, as we may gather from v. 9, 10, 11, 12.

That good children as well as bad, may be outwardly punished for the sins of their parents.

4 Observa-  
tion.

4 From all Israels lamenting the death of this hopeful young man; Observe,

That good men who have been, and might be further useful in their lives, should be much lamented at their death; they that have lived desired, should die lamented.

5 Observa-  
tion.

5 From these words, he shall go to his grave in peace; It is a great blessing to go to ones grave in peace, in times of war and common calamity.

He was good towards God;

6 Observa-  
tion.

6 He is good indeed, who is so to God, as well as unto men; many are good in mans sight, that are not so in the sight of God.

Rom. 2. 28.

There are two other circumstances upon which I shall a little enlarge my self, before I come to the main point I intend to handle.

From the age of this son of Jeroboam, who is here commended for his goodness, it is said, he was a child, v. 12. Whence it may be observed,

1 Doct.

It is very commendable to see goodness in young people: to see young men good men, is a very commendable thing.

There were many good men in that time, but to be good so soon as Abijah was, when he was a child, the Scripture records this to his praise.

1 I shall shew you that it is a commendable thing to see young men good men. This I prove,

First, because the Scripture makes very honourable mention of young men, when good men; as first of Obadiab, that he feared the Lord from his youth. And it is recorded to the honour of Timothy, that he knew the holy Scriptures from a child. Jerom conceives that John was the most beloved Disciple, because he was the youngest of all. God remembers the kindness of our youth. God takes more kindly

1 Kings 18. 12.

2 Tim. 3. 15.

John 13.

Jer. 2. 2.

kindly the tenderness of our youth than of our age, it was matter of joy unto John, that he found children walking in the truth.

Secondly, because God commends moral and common goodness in the young man in the Gospel, Christ is said to love him for his moral goodness, and natural ingenuity.

The reason why it is so commendable in a young man to be a good man, is this, because their temptations are more, and their affections are stronger to carry them from God; youth hath a stronger aptitude and proclivity to sin than any other age, their blood is sooner stirr'd up to choler, and their strength to lust. As every relation hath its special sin, so every age of a mans life; old age is peevish and covetous; middle age proud, malicious and revengeful; young men are usually rash, lustful and voluptuous; and therefore Paul bids Timothy flee all youthful lusts; and therefore seeing youth is exposed to so many temptations, and subject to so many corruptions, it is rare to see young men good.

Oh then be exhorted you that are young, to become religious betimes; and to quicken you hereunto, Consider:

1 If you be not good in your youth, you can never use the Psalmists arguments, *Cast me not off, O Lord, in the time of my old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth, &c.* and his argument he had before, *v. 3. for thou art my hope, and hast been my trust from my youth:* and who would be without such an argument on his death-bed?

2 Consider, there are recorded in Scripture many young men that were good, of all sorts and conditions, and of all collages; and the Holy Ghost doth not only set down their goodness, but their age in which they were good: *Salomon* a young King, *Obadiah* a young Courier, *Daniel* a young Prophet, *Jehoiada* a young Apostle, *Timothy* a young Preacher, and here *Abijah* a young Prince; and all these were good men, and are recorded for our example and encouragement.

3 Consider, that God in the dispensations of his grace bestows it upon young men, and passeth by the elder. Thus *Methu* the younger was righteous; and *Cham* wicked: *Jacob* the younger brother loved; and *Esa*u hated: Thus *David* the youngest of *Jesse* sons, and yet the best of them, and the chosen of the Lord.

1 Epist. lorn 4.

Mark 10. 37.

1 Tim. 1. 22.

1 U/c.

Plat. 7. 9. compared with *Jer's* 9. 1. 2.

1 Sam. 16. 11. 13.

God

Gen. 48. 14.

God doth many times do as Jacob did when he blessed the children of Joseph: he stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon the head of Ephraim the younger son: so doth God in the dispensation of his grace many times pitch on the youngest; God saith, as Joseph, of all the rest, bring me Benjamin, and gives him a double portion.

1 Cor. 7. 33.

The time of your youth is the freest age of your life to betake your selves to the exercise of religion and duties of godlinesse. Young men that are servants, have more freedom and lesse cares then when they grow in yeers, and the cares and incumbrances of a family fill their hands, and clog their hearts.

Consider, if thou art not gracious in youth, the sins of thy youth may trouble thy conscience in thy old age. Many young men who are active and venturous in the heat of their youth, get those bodily bruises and blows, that they feel the ache thereof to their dying day. Thou that givest a blow or a bruise to thy conscience in thy youth, mayest feel this in thy old age.

Those sins which now thou feelest not, may be a trouble to thy conscience, and an aking to thy heart, when thou liest on thy death-bed. And though God do not remember the sins of your youth to damne your souls; yet he may make you remember them so as to be a trouble to your consciences.

These things which are the joyes of youth, may be the bitter burdens of old age. Take heed of laying a load on thy conscience when thou art young, lest God write bitter things against thee when old, and make thee to possesse the sins of thy youth, and fill thy bones with the sins of thy youth.

A second use of reproofe of two sorts of people.

First, Of those who instead of being good when young, are wicked when they are young, such as fill their youth with manifold evils. Usually youth is subject to these evils:

1. Pride is the sin of youth. A Preacher must not be a young novice, lest he be lifted up with pride.

2. Rashness and indiscretion is usually the sin of a young head. Exhort young men, (saith Paul to Titus) to be sober-minded, to be discreet or wise; how rash and heady was the counsel of the young men to Rehoboam, which made him lose his Kingdom 2 years teach experience.



3 Lustfulness, which was the ground of *Paul's* caution to young *Timothy*. If *Timothy* who was so abstemious a man, that *Paul* gave him advice to drink some wine with his water, had need of this caution, how much more have they that are not so exercised in duties of mortification? Which gave *Solomon* ground to give that counsel, *Put away the evils of thy flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity*. He was a young man that followed the harlot to her house.

2 Tim. 2. 22.

Eccles. 11. 10.  
Proverbs 7. 7.

4 Fickleness and unsettledness of judgement; and therefore in times of error, the younger sort are most subject to be seduced; *Children are tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine*; the Hebrew calls a young man *נָעֵם*, which comes from *נָעַם*, and signifies to toss to and fro, intimating that they are unsettled and unstayed in their judgments & resolutions. How soon was the mind of that rich and forward young man changed, mentioned in the Gospel?

Ephes. 4. 14.  
נָעֵם from  
נָעַם, movit de  
loco in locum.  
Matt. 19. 22.  
2 Kings 2. 23.  
Job 30. 1, 2.

5 To scoff and condemn the aged; they were children who did mock the aged Prophet; the young men derided *Job*.

6 Sensual pleasures and pastimes—they do rejoice and cheer their hearts in the days of their youth; *Samson made a feast, for so used the young men to do*.

Eccles. 18. 9.  
Judg. 14. 10.  
Job 1. 4.

Secondly, Reproof lights heavily on those who seem to be good in their youth, but in their old age cast off goodness; how many are like *Joash*, who seemed to be a good young man whilst he seemed to be under the tuition of *Jehoiada*; but when he was dead, how did he break out?

How many are there in the World, who have lost their affection and desires after God; which they had in their youth? It was a brand set upon *Solomon*, who, though when young was well taught by his mother, yet when he grew old, his wives turned away his heart from God. *Son David* had his first days, which were better than his last.

Prov. 21. 1.

Even to amongst us, we have too many, who when they were young did love Religion, and delight in Ordinances,

and when they became old have abated exceedingly, which may make them to fear the sincerity of their goodness; for he that is truly good in youth will be so in his old age.

A second remarkable circumstance is this, that this young *Abijah* was good in the house of *Jeroboam*. Whence observe,

That it is a great commendation for men to retain their goodness whilst they live in bad places and families; That this is so, we may see by that commendable mention the Scriptures make of such as were good in evil places. Thus God commends the Church of *Pergamus*, *I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is, and thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas my faithful Martyr, who was slain amongst you, where Satan dwelleth. Pergamus was a City more given to Idolatry than all the Cities of Asia, and yet there were some that held fast the Name of Christ, and did not deny his faith. To be a Saint in Nero's family is very commendable.*

And the reason thereof is,

1 Because many of Gods children have failed, and abated much of their goodness in bad places. How did *Peter* fall in the High Priests Hall, though when in good company he was zealous, yet there he denied Christ. So *Abraham* when he was in *Gerar*, and *Isaac* also, denied their wives: so *Joseph* in *Pharaoh's Court*, and learn't the Court-Oath, to swear by the life of *Pharaoh*. Hence God commands the children of *Israel*, not to mix themselves with the Heathens, lest they learn their manners and customs. Bad places are like bad air for zeal to breathe in. As sheep amongst briars lose part of their fleece: so good men in bad company lose part of their goodness. As one scabbed sheep may infect a whole flock: so one root of bitterness may spring up, and defile many.

2 Because it is a clear evidence of the sincerity of a mans goodness, to be good in a bad place. This shows thy grace to be grace indeed, when thou hast discouragements to be good, and then art holy; this is a demonstration that thou art sincerely good, and that thy goodness is not counterfeit, and taken up upon any sinister and hypocritical end. It is good to be good with the good; but it is most excellent to be good amongst the bad, and to be best amongst the worst.

From

Revel. 2. 13.

Phil. 4. 21.

Heb. 12. 15.



From hence learn the power and unloose-ableness of saving grace; grace keeps a man good in the worst times; let a man be cast into prison or bad company (which is the worst temptation) yet he shall not lose his grace; true grace is compared to oyl, now cast oyl into a vessel of water, and the oyl will not mix with the water, but wil lye on the top; grace wil swim upon the water of temptation. As all the water in the salt Sea cannot make the fish salt; so all the wicked in the world cannot change the nature of grace; a good man like the fish retains his goodness in bad places; thus Joseph retained his goodness in the Court of wicked Pharaoh, Nehemiah in the Court of Artaxerxes, Obadiab in Ahab's Court, Daniel in Nebuchadnezzars, the Saints in Nero's household, and Abijah in wicked and idolatrous Ieroboam's house.

Though it be a commendable thing to be good in bad places; yet you ought to bewail your living in bad places, it is your misery though not your sin; thus did Isaiah, *Wo is me, I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of unclean lips; so David, Wo is me that I dwell in Mezack, and have my habitation in the tents of Kedar*, i. e. with the sinful, idolatrous and barbarous people, the posterity of Ishmael; thus, *Lots righteous soul was vexed from day to day, while he dwelt in Sodom, and saw their unclean conversations.*

Hence we may gather, that it is our duty, the more bad the place or family is where God hath cast your dwelling, the better and more blameless you should labour to be; you will by this adorn your Profession, stop the mouths of adversaries, allure and win others to embrace Christianity. --- *We must be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation, amongst whom ye shine as lights in the world.* Stars shine brightest in a dark night, and fire burneth hottest in a cold and frosty day: so should thy star of Profession shine brightest in darkest places, where thou livest, and the fire of thy zeal burn hottest in cold time, when the love of many waxes cold.

Then certainly it is a vain plea for men to excuse their wickedness, because they live in bad places; this was

Use 1.

2.

Isa. 6. 5.  
Pl. 120. 5.

Gen. 25.  
13.  
2 Pet. 2.  
7. 3.

3.

Phil. 2. 15.

Gen. 20.  
11.  
Non ego  
sum ambi-  
tiosus, sed  
nemo Ro-  
mæ aliter  
vivere po-  
test; non  
ego sum  
sumptuo-  
sus, sed  
urbis ipsa  
magnas  
impensas  
exigit.  
Sen,

6

Bonus  
mali con-  
sortio sa-  
cile pejo-  
ratur.  
Jude 23.  
Lev. 15.4.

Deut. 22.  
10.

1 Cor. 5.9.  
10.  
Psal. 26.  
45.

7

Prov. 13.  
10.

*Abrahams fault, to excuse his ly: by being at Gerar. Seneca blames men of laying the fault of their badness on the place where they live. I am not ambitious by nature, but no man that lives at Rome can be otherwise. I am not given to costly and rich Apparel, but I must do so when I am at Rome. It is the badness of thy heart, and not the place that makes thee bad; no place though never so good, can exempt a man from sin; the Angels sinned in Heaven, Adam in Paradise, Judas in Christs family, and no place though never so bad can excuse a man from sin.*

If it be so commendable to be good in bad places, then it is abominable to be bad in good places, to be dirty swine in a fair meadow; Oh how many are bad in good Families, who despise good counsels, and hate the duties of Religion in religious families! If it was bad for Peter to be evil amongst the High-Priests servants, how abominable was it for Judas to be a Traitor amongst the Apostles, and in the family of Christ himself.

Delight not to be in bad places and company; to delight in such argues thou art bad thy self. We are to hate the garment spotted with the flesh; some expound this, To avoid the occasions of sin: but Master Perkins gives this sense, To hate bad company, and he saith, it alludes unto the Ceremonial law, That if a man had a leprous garment, or a garment any otherwise made unclean, his company was to be avoided. God therefore gave that command, Not to plough with an Oxe and an Ass together, the Ass was an unclean creature, and the Oxe was one of the clean beasts, and they must not be in the same yoke; To note, (say Divines) that Gods people and prophane persons must not be yoked together. Though they may occasionally meet together, yet they must not be yoked together: a man may trade with the wickedest man alive; commerce is not forbidden, but our joyning with wicked men in a needless familiarity:

Keep company with the godly, and delight your selves with such as are good. It is lawful to be in bad company when a just occasion calls, but it is profitable to be in good company. He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but he that is a companion of fools shall be destroyed. As a man that comes in a shop of perfumes will carry away the sent with

with him : so a man by conversing with the godly shall carry away some good with him. Labour to chuse those for thy companions from whom thou maist get some good ; but if God should cast thee into a house like the family of *Ieroboam*, imitate good *Abijah*, of whom it is said, *That in him was found some good to the Lord God of Israel, even in the house of Ieroboam.*



I KINGS 14.

part of the 13. Verse.

— *Because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Ieroboam.*



Having dispatched the Observations, which may be gathered from the circumstances of the text, I come to that main Doctrine which I intend to handle, which is,

*God doth not only exactly take notice of, but also tenderly cherish and graciously reward the smallest beginnings, and weakest measures of grace, which he works in the hearts of his own people.*

It might produce a cloud of testimonies to confirm this point. Our Saviour Christ said, that *he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.* Observe, it is not said, the strong Oak shall not be broken ; but the *bruised* reed shall not be broken ; not the light and flaming torch, but the *smoking Flax* shall not be quenched. — *Smoking Flax*, where there is but little fire and much smoke of infirmity, yet Christ will not quench it, i.e. he will cherish it ; Here is the Figure *Meiosis*, here is less spoken then is intended. — He will be so far from quenching that he will cherish

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rence Jew  
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Doct.

Mat. 12. 20

Partic-  
ulars of the  
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the  
flax

**Pfal. 51. 1** the *smoking flax*, as in another place God is said, *that he will not despise a broken heart*; i. e. H: will highly esteem it.

**Cant. 2. 13** Solomon speaks of the *fig-tree* putting forth her green figs, and the *vine* with her tender grapes gives a good smell, that is, the little measure and weak beginnings of grace in young Converts, do please the Lord Jesus Christ, and are as a sweet smelling in his nostrils. Again Christ saith, *Let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranate bud forth*. The green buds are regarded by Christ as well as the ripe and grown fruit.

**Cant. 7. 12**

In opening of the Doctrine, I shall endeavour to clear these two things.

1. That some of Gods people have but weak measures and small beginnings of grace.
2. Though there be but a little grace, yet God will regard and reward it.

**1. Propo-  
sition.**

1. That some of Gods people have but a little grace--- have but the beginnings of grace wrought in their souls. In the handling whereof are three things.

1. The truth of the Proposition may be made good from the Scriptures.
2. I will lay down notes of discovery, to know such as have but small measures of grace wrought in them.
3. And then show why God in his wisdom, will not suffer his people to be all of an equal strength and stature in grace.

**1. Quest.**

1. How doth it appear that some of Gods People are but weak in grace?

**1. Answ.**

[Rom. 15.

1.

1 Cor. 3.

1.

1 Ioh. 2. 14

1 Ila. 68.

2

Pf. 92. 12.

Ma. 12.

20

2 Can. 18

2. By the different names and titles that are given unto Christians in holy Scriptures, arguing they are of different measure and growth of grace. 1. Some are called *strong men*, and others *weak*. 2. Some are called *Babes in Christ*, and others called *grown men*. 3. Some are called *Trees of Righteousness*, *Plants of Renown*, that grow like Cedars in Lebanon: Others are but a *bruised reed*. Some are *Kids in Christs flock*, and *Lambs*. Others are as the *He-goat*, that go *stately before the flock*. 4. Some have grace flaming forth in much zeal and vivacity, they have *the Spirit of burning*

And

1. the Spirit of burning; And others are but *smoking flax*, i.e. Christians that have much of the smoke of infirmity, and but little of the flame of grace.

1 Ioh. 3. 15, 16, 17.  
J 11. 4. 4.

2. By the Analogy that is between spiritual and natural differences of age, strength, and stature in man; the Holy Scriptures exactly sets down all the different degrees of grace under the similitude of the different ages of men.

Ans. 2.

1. There is a *forming of Christ* in the heart, and so a spiritual conception.

2 Gal. 4. 19

2. There are those that are but new-born *Babes* in Christ.

1 Pet. 1. 23  
& c. 2. 1.

3. There are some who are advanced from infancy to be *Young-men*.

1 Joh. 2. 13.

4. There are some that are grown men in Christ, *Old men*.—And all this doth but set forth the different degrees of grace that are in Christians, some having less, and some more.—In the Church of Christ, which is his Orchard, there are trees of all sorts, *Spikenard* and *Saffron*, *Calamus* and *Cynamon*, with all trees of *Frankincense*, *Myrrhe* and *Aloes*, &c. *Brightman* on this Scripture notes, that hereby is meant the several sorts of Christians. *Spikenard* and *Saffron* are young weak Professors; these are tender plants that scarce lift up the head above the ground. *Calamus* & *Cynamon*, which are shrubs of two cubits high, note Christians of a middle size; and the other trees note Christians of a more eminent measure and growth in grace.

ibid.

Cant. 2. 14

Brightman.

A second Question, *How may a man know himself, that he is but of a little measure and small beginning in grace?*

Quest. 2.

1. To be much in dependance on duties, argues thou art but weak in grace. A young Christian is like a young Carpenter, he makes many chips and hath many blows, but doth not make such smooth work as an experienced Carpenter, who will make fewer chips, and at fewer blows better work; so young Christians, they are much in the use of duty, but they are apt to rely upon duty; they think duties make them Saints, and they are apt to make Saviours of their duties. Young Christians are 1. Affectionate in duties, and 2. Frequent in their duties. 3. And see not their failings in their duties, and so are apt to rest on their duties. As it is a sign of an Apostate Professor to cast off duty, so also

Ans. 1.



a note of a young and weak Professor to rest too much upon his duties.

*Ans. 2.*

2. A weak Christian is not clearly insighted into the close and spiritual failings, which cleave to his performances. He doth see his gifts, and take notice of his affections, but he doth not see the vanity of his mind, the unsoundness of his mind, the unsoundness of his ends, his carnal dependance upon his duty, self-love and vain-glory; but in tract of time a grown Christian doth take notice of these things in himself; an experienced Christian will take as much notice of his failing in duty, as of his ability in it, and though he discern an enlargement of gifts and graces in him at some times; yet he still discerns much spirituall pride, popular applause, ostentation of gifts, too much forwardness in setting out his parts, which a weak Christian seldom perceives.

*Ans. 3.*

Rom 14. 1

Rom. 15. 1

Rom. 14.

21.

1 Cor. 8. 7.

c. 92.

3. To have a scrupulous conscience about matters of indifferency argues a weak Christian; for so the Apostle calls them, *weak in the faith*, such as did bind conscience when the Scriptures left it free. One Believer thought he might eat anything, and another doubted of lawfulness of eating sundry things. Now those that doubted, the Apostle calls *\* Weak; and the weak Conscience is apt to be defiled*. Not to know our Liberty, and to abuse our Liberty, is an argument we have but little grace. Young Converts make more sins then ever God made; they perplex and intangle themselves merely in indifferent things. It is true, there ought to be a conscientious tenderness in all Christians: tenderness of conscience is our duty, but a tormenting, intangling scrupulosity is our infirmity: and yet as a weak Christian is better then no Christian, a weak faith is better then a dead faith; so a scrupulous conscience is better then a seared conscience.

*Ans. 4.*

4. To be so intently set on the exercises of Religion, as to neglect our particular callings, is a sign we are but weak in grace. It was a good saying of that famous man of God, Dr. Sibbs; *I like that Christian well, that will hear much, and live much, that will pray much and work much*. In young Converts, their affections are strong and stirring, and they think they can never hear enough, and they many times do neglect

Dr. Sibbs.

neglect the duties of their callings, which doth argue their weakness and infirmity. An experienced grown Christian, is regular in his general and particular calling; so as the one shall not justle and hinder the other.

5. To have mens persons in admiration argues weakness in grace; Such were the *Corinthians*, who had mens persons in admiration: The Apostle calls them *Children, Babes, and poor, low, and carnal Christians: Babes*, though they had the life of Christians; yet they had but little of the strength of Christians. — *They were carnal, they savoured more of the flesh then of the spirit.* Ignorance is often a cause of admiration; weak Christians who have but little knowledge, are apt to be so taken with mens persons, that one cryes, *I am of Paul*, and another, *I am of Apollo*, and so fall into the sin condemned of having the faith of Christ with respect of persons, to cry up one Minister, and to cry down others. To idolize some, and to despise others argues that thou art weak in faith. A solid Christian loves all good Ministers, and can contemn none.

6. To be easily seduced and led away into error, argues but weakness in grace. Those the Apostle calls *Children, who are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.* Weakness of head doth argue that grace is not very strong in thy heart. The way not to fall from our steadfastness, is, to *grow in grace*; for the Apostle Peter doth joyne those two duties together, having given a caution, *vers. 17. not to fall from steadfastness, vers. 18.* He gives counsell to *grow in grace*; strong Christians are steadfast, whereas weak ones are inconstant; and therefore those Professors that have been whirl'd about with divers opinions, it is an evidence they have but weak grace, if any.

7. Such as are only acquainted with the common Principles of Religion, without further search into the depths and mysteries of Religion. — There are some Professors who may be truly stiled *Babes in Christ*, because they have need of *milk*, being *unskillfull* in the Word of Righteousness, that is, in the more solid doctrines of the Gospel, concerning Christ, who is our Righteousness. Thus the Disciples and Apostles of Christ knew but little of the myserie of our Redemption at first, and were ignorant concerning the

Ans. 5.

1 Cor. 3. 1.

1 Tim. 2. 1.  
2 Tim. 2. 25.  
Gal. 3. 1.

Ans. 6.

Eph. 4. 14.

2 Pet. 3. 17  
18.

Ans. 7.

Heb. 5. 12.



\* Luke 9. 45. *a* Passion of Christ, of the *b* Resurrection, as also of the *c* Ascension of Christ, till the Holy Ghost came and taught them these things, and brought those things to remembrance that Christ had taught them.

*b* Mar. 9.

10.

*c* Joh. 16.

16, 17.

*Ans. w.* 8.

8. Weak Christians are strong in affections, and not in judgement, they have usually more heat then light; young Christians are like young Horses, they have much mettall, but are not so fit for a journey, because they are not so through-paced: there are many Christians that have much zeal and affection, but are not solid in their judgement; but this argues much weakness in grace.

*Ans. w.* 9.

9. A weak Christian is one that cannot bear reproof. Sharp weather will discover whether thou art of a weak or sound body, — so a sharp reproof will discover whether thou art of a weak spiritual temper and constitution. When Nathan came to David, he could bear the reproof, though the Prophet told him to his face. *He was the man that had sinned; Asa*, though a good man, could not endure the faithfull reproof of a Prophet, *But was wroth with the Seer, and put him in the Prison-house.*

2 Sam. 12.

7.

2 Chron.

16. 10.

*Ans. w.* 10

10 A weak Believer is one that can trust God for his soul, but not for his body. — So Jesus Christ argues that those had *little faith*, who did expect heaven and happiness from God their Father, and durst trust him with their souls and eternal concerns, and yet durst not trust him for food and rayment. There are those that dare trust God for heaven, and yet not trust him for earth, — but these are *δουλοὶ, of little faith*. The Disciples when they wanted bread, began to reason amongst themselves how they should be supplied, — *Oh ye of little faith* (saith Christ) *why do you thus reason? Can you trust me for the bread of eternall life, and dare you not trust me for the bread of this life.*

Mat. 6. 30.

δουλοὶ

Mar. 16. 8.

*Vse* 1.

Be not then discouraged you that discern in your selves, but small measures of grace, look on your wants and imperfections, so as to grow in grace, and not to be content with any measure: But look not on the small beginnings in grace, as discouragement to you. When you see in a field a great Oak, you may say this great tree was once but a small acorn. Those Christians who are now but small sprigs, may hereafter betall Cedars; say to thy soul, though I am but weak,

yet

yet I shall be strong; grace where it is true will be growing; the *smoking Flax* may be a burning and shining Lamp in Gods Candlestick. and therefore as you must not be content with the greatest measure of grace; so neither be discouraged with the least measure of grace; A grain of mustard-seed may grow a great tree.

Content not your selves with small measures of grace; a little of the world will not content you:—In the womb a foot contents us, three foot in the Cradle, and seven foot in the grave; but betwixt the Cradle, and the grave, a whole world will not content us; and shall a little grace content us? For wealth and desire of it; thou art as the Horse-leech which cries, give, give; and as the grave that never saith it is enough; and for grace wilt thou be content with a little?

Matth. 20  
Use 2.



# I KINGS. 14.

## part of the 13. Verse.

—Because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.



We have given some Scripture-Characters of those that have a little grace, now we proceed to resolve a third question.

3. *Quest.* Why doth God so order and ordain it, that among his own people all shall not be of an equall stature in Christ, but there are of them some in whom there shall be but the beginnings of grace found?

*Ans.* It is true, it is not with Regeneration as it was in the Creation; it is not with the Trees of Righteousness, as it was with the Trees of Paradise, which were created all

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Quest. 3.

Ans.

perfect at the first: but it is not so in the Work of Grace, we are not perfectly sanctified, nor at once, but we perfect holiness in the fear of God, and that by degrees; and God hath given to some of his people but small beginnings and measures of grace; and that for these Reasons.

Heb. 12.

23.

Eph. 4. 13.

1. To put a difference between our estate on earth, and our being in Heaven. In Heaven we shall all have an equal stature in grace, though it be disputed that there are different degrees of glory. But in Heaven the spirits of just men shall all be made perfect, and there we shall all come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. All Believers here are justified by God alike. God doth not acquit the strong, and hold guilty the weak; but justification is alike to all, but our sanctification is not alike; but when we come to Heaven, our sanctification shall be then as our justification is now, that is, perfect and equal, we shall have not only a perfection of parts, but of degrees.

2. This is to make men live in a continual dependance upon divine influence and supplies from the spirit of God. If children should be born perfect men as Adam was created, we should not then see that continual need of, and dependance on our Parents. We are bred in the womb, and afterward born into the World, and then by degrees grow up from stature to stature; and so it is in grace. God deals thus—Converting grace doth not make us so perfect as we shall be afterward. At the first Creation he made the trees all fruitful, and at their full growth; but now 'tis otherwise, they are first kernels or seeds, then plants before they are grown trees, and they have dependance on the influences of Heaven: so we are first Babes, then young men, and then strong men in Christ, to keep our souls in a dependance on Gods grace.

3. For the greater ornament of the mystical body of Christ. In a natural body, if every member should be of an equal bigness, the body would be monstrous: But the body is so proportioned in its different members, that the lesser become serviceable to the greater, and so they all orderly discharge their mutual operations. As in Musick there would be no harmony, if the strings were all of an equal bigness; but one string being the base, and the other

the treble, that makes the Musick to be more melodious; so it is in grace; the different degrees of grace makes the body of Christ more harmonious. It is here as in some curious piece of needle-work; if all the filkes were of one colour, it would not set out the work with so much lustre and amiableness, as the variety of colours will do.

4. To make Gods people see a necessity of maintaining fellowship and communion together, to edifie and build up each other. There would be no need of Christian discourse and holy fellowship, did not our weakness require it. As among the members of the body, God hath so ordered them, that each member is serviceable to another, *the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee*: so among the people of God, some being weak, others strong, there is a necessity of maintaining Communion together. There is an infinit in nature, that things weak in themselves cleave to those things which are stronger then they. *The Conies are but a feeble Folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks*: among birds *the Dove* the fillicst and most shifles creature, yet she hides her self in *the clefts of the rock*; the Vine among the trees the weakest, yet it clings to the wall; the Hops among the plants, yet it twins about the pole: So God hath ordered it in his infinit wisdom, that some Christians should be stronger, and some weaker in grace, that the strong may help the weak, and each be serviceable to one another.

5. To set out the glory of God in all his glorious attributes.

1. This different size of grace in Christians, doth glorifie the mercy of God; and the free grace of God, who when there are some Christians that have but a little grace, yet God rewards those small measures of grace with great measures of glory.

2. This magnifies the power of God, who when we are weak, yet the great God manifest his power in our weakness, yea, *his strength is made perfect in weakness*. And therefore Paul addes, *vers. 10. For when I am weak, then am I strong*, that is, in Christ. Is it not a demonstration of great power, to keep a small spark of fire that it shall not be quenched in a flood of water? yet behold that little sparke of grace in thee, shall not be quenched in thee by the flood and

1 Cor. 13.  
21.

Pro. 30. 26  
Cant. 2. 14

2 Cor. 12.  
9. 10.  
Vers. 10.

torrent of thy corruptions. It is by Gods power that the least measure of grace shall be preserved. There is not so much of Gods power seen in preserving the Angels, as a weak Believer; for the Angels, though mutable, yet are perfect creatures, they have no weights of sins and corruptions to pull them down. But alas! we have such a bias and inclination to sin, that we are apt to be turned aside from God every moment. The power of God is more seen in preserving a poor Believer in the state of grace, then in preserving the Angels in the state of innocency. And as Gods power is seen in preserving of a little grace; so it is also seen in the increasing of small grace. Grace is like to that cloud which the Prophets servant saw, which at first was but like a mans hand, but afterwards it over-spread the whole Heavens. True grace is of a spreading and increasing nature; and therefore the increase of our graces may be shadowed out in the vision of the waters of the Sanctuary, which at first were but to the ankles, after that to the knees, then to the loynes; and at last so deep that they could not be passed over.

3. God doth hereby glorifie his wisdom. As Gods wisdom is demonstrated in the world, by the variety of creatures, which are not all of the same bulk and bignesse, but some bigger and some lesser: so in the Church of God, his wisdom appears, that some Christians are of greater, and some of a lesser measure of grace. Search the whole Creation, and you shall find the wisdom of God in the variety of Creatures. In the Heavens there are the greater and lesser lights, and so stars of different magnitude, doe beautifie and bespangle the Heavens: so in the Sea there are greater and lesser fishes: In the air the great Eagle and little Sparrow: on the earth the Elephant and little Dog: Amongst the creeping things there's the great Serpent and the little Pismire: Amongst the vegetables, the tall Cedar, and the Hyssop on the wall: And also amongst the rationall Creatures, there is a Gyant and a Dwarf: a grown man of a tall stature, and a child but of a span long. So is Gods wisdom greatly illustrated, that as there is variety of naturall proportions in the world; so there are various proportions of grace in his Church amongst his children.

Before

1 King. 18.

44-45.

Ezek 47.

314-5.

De 10:1-17

11:1-17

12:1-17

13:1-17

14:1-17

15:1-17

16:1-17

17:1-17

18:1-17

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99:1-17

100:1-17



Before I come to apply this point, which is of very great use to Gods children, for their comfort; I shall lay downe some generall Positions about small measures of grace.

That in the Church there are found more weak Christians then strong, more young Converts then old and growne Christians.

As in a Forrest, there are more young sprouts then old trees, in a Garden more young slips then old roots, in the world more young children then old men. In *Niniveh* there were 120000 Infants, but there was not such a number of old men. *By how much things are perfect, by so much they are the fewer.* Look amongst other creatures, those that are of a bigger bulk are of a lesser number, as in the Sea there are more young and little fish then great Whales: on the earth the smallest things are *innumerable*; in the air there are more swarms of flies, then flocks of Birds; so in the Church of God there are more that are young and weak Converts then old Christians. It is with most Christians as it was with *Jonathan's* signall arrowes, which he shot to warn *David* by, of which two fell short, and but one beyond the mark:

—So where one Christian shoots home to the mark of the price of the high calling in Christ *Iesus*, there are many fal short

That there are many that have but weak measures and small beginnings of grace, who have been a long time under the Profession of Religion, and under the means of grace; such were the *Hebrews*, who for the time that they ought to be teachers, yet had need that one should teach them againe, which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milke and not of strong meat; and I may accommodate to this purpose that speech of Christ, *Many that first shall be last, and the last shall be first.* There are many who went out early, and took as it were the first step in Profession of Religion, and yet others have overgone them, who went out after them. Many who have but weak measures of grace, have been of long standing under the means of grace. And therefore Christians are not to judge the strength of grace by their Profession, but by their Proficiency; It is not how many years you have been Professors, but what experience and judgement have you gotten under Ordinances?

1. Proposition.

Ioh. 4. 17.  
*Quos perfectiores, eo pauciores.*  
Jer. 46. 23.

1 Sam. 20.  
36.

2 Posit.

Heb. 5. 12.

Mat. 19. 30.

Posit. 3.  
Misericordias  
Dei  
sunt misericordiae  
nostrae.

Dans crow-  
nat non  
merita ne-  
stra, sed  
dona sua.

Cant. 3. 14

Cant. 1. 15

Cant. 1. 10

Cant. 4. 1.  
2, 3, 4, &c.

Ezek. 16.  
14.

Posit. 4.

Mat. 8. 16.  
compared  
with Mar.  
4. 40.

That the smallest measures of grace cannot merit eternal life and glory, because great measures cannot. In merit there ought to be a proportion; but between grace and glory there is none: our services are imperfect, our salvation is perfect; our services but momentary, our glory is eternal; there is no comparison between our light duties and eternal weight of glory. The Church in the *Canticles* is described according to the severall parts of her bod: *Her voice is sweet, her Countenance comely, and her Doves eyes are beautifull.* Behold, thou art fair my Love, (saith Christ) thou hast *Doves eyes, thy Cheeks are comely with rowes of Jewels, and thy neck with chains of gold.* Now it is very observable, that though Christ commendeth the Churches Eyes, her Hair, her Teeth, Lips and Speech, her Temples, her Breasts, her Neck, &c. yet he doth not commend her hands, to shew, that though she be adorned with many graces, as with so many beautifull ornaments and comely lineaments, yet these merits nothing at the hands of Christ by all her doings. *The Churches beauty is perfect through the Comeliness of Christ.*

That Believers ought not to rest satisfied with the small measures of grace they have received; though a little grace may bring you to Heaven, yet you are not to take up therewith, but if you have got a little grace, labour for more; and to quicken you hereunto, consider.

1. Small measures of grace are not so sensible and evidentiall to your selves; little things because they are little are not seen. There may be little dust hovering up & down in the air, yet because it is small we see it not: this is the reason why Christians doubt; grace is little, and therefore it is not discern'd. Compare *Mat. 8. 26.* with *Mar. 4. 40.* and we shall find, that in *Matthew* Christ saith, in his reproof to his Disciples, *Oh ye of little faith?* And in *Mark*, *How is it that ye have no faith?* You may from the variety of these expressions gather this, that a little faith unexercised, as to comfort, is as good as no faith: it was so little it was as good as none, in that particular exigence they were in; you may have a little grace, and yet as to comfort, that little and weak grace may not further thee in a way of strong consolation. Not but that a weak Christian is accepted, and the weaker Christian may lie in his fathers bosome;—

yet



yet it is the strength of grace that gives us strong consolation.

2. Consider, that small measures of grace, though they may bring you to Heaven, yet they are not so usefull to others; a weak Christian cannot doe much good in Christian Converse, because they want judgement and experience in the wayes of God; and therefore such as are not to be received to *doubtfull disputations*, but are to be borne withall. Spirituall and strong Christians are most usefull. Young Converts are not fit for some exercises about Religion; they are not fit to strengthen others. *When thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren*: It is not to be understood of his first conversion, but of his Progresse in Religion, as if Christ had said: when thou art strengthened thy self, strengthen thy brethren—There are some duties which young Converts are not fit for; *A piece of new cloth is not fit for an old garment, neither old bottles fit for new wine.* Pareus and most Expositors refer that place to that case of conscience, *Why Christs Disciples did not fast often?*—They were like old and weak bottles, and so were not fit for that strong duty which was as new wine, and would be apt to break them. Christ said to his Disciples, *That he had many things to say unto them, whioh in regard of their weaknesse they were not then able to bear.*

3. Nor are small measures of grace so honourable to God. God is glorified, when his people bear much fruit. Much means and pains and little fruit, is a shame to the Vine-dresser; and therefore Believers must not rest satisfied with small measures of grace.

It is our duty to improve those small measures of grace which God hath given us.—And consider, *He that is faithfull in a little, God will make him Ruler over much.* Use of grace will increase it;—yet if thy grace be increased, ascribe all to God, it is Gods pound, and not thy pains hath gained.

1. Use is of comfort to weak Christians, to those young *Abijahs*, in whom there is found but small little good. Let such know to their comfort

1. Though thy grace be but little in quantity, yet it is much in value. A pearle though but little in substance, yet it

Rom. 14.  
1 & 2. 15.  
11  
Gal. 6. 1  
Luk. 22.  
23.

Mat. 9. 16.  
17.  
Pareus.

Ver. 14.

Ioh. 16. 12.

Ioh. 15. 2.

Posit. 5.

Luk. 19.  
17.

Use 1.

it is of great worth: so a little grace is of great value; *The heart of a wicked man is nothing worth*; you may have much knowledge and seeming grace, but no true worth. A shop full of barrels will not make a man rich, unless those vessels be full of commodities: gifts as to heaven, are but the lumber of a Christian, it is grace that makes him rich towards God.

2. Though thy grace be little for the present, yet it will grow for the future to a greater measure. The little grain of *Mustard-seed (the least of seeds)* will in time grow up to a tree. Grace is fitly compared to *leaven*, which is of a spreading nature, to the *cloud* which the Prophets servant saw, and to the *waters of the Sanctuary*, which did all increase. An Infant of dayes shall proceed by degrees, till he become like the *Ancient of days*, perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect. Naturalists observe, that the seeds of the cypresse-tree are very small, and yet of them proceeds a very high tree: Such is the birth and growth of grace.

3. The little measure of grace once begun in the soul shall be perfected.—*God will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, untill judgement be perfected in victory.* By Judgement is meant there, the work of *Sanctification*, till that comes to be prevalent over corruption. *Paul* was confident, That he that *had begun a good work in them, would finish it, unto the day of Jesus Christ.* The Lord is faithful and will do it; God hath commanded us to *goe on to perfection*, and he doth not command impossibilities. God blames men of folly, is not proceeding to *finish when they have begun to build.* God will never begin to rear up a structure of grace, and never finish it.—Besides, God hath promised to perfect that which concerneth his servants.

4. The weakest Christian hath grace alike for quality, though not for quantity: though thy grace be not so much; yet it is as true as others: though but a Convert of yesterday; yet grace as true as if an old Stander in Religion—*Faith is alike precious in all Believers, for quality, though not for quantity.*—Faith in all Believers is alike.

1. In respect of the Author, God.

2. The Object, it holds upon, the same Christ.

3. The Means of working it are the same.

viz.

Mat. 13.

31, 32.

Mat. 13. 33

1 King. 18.

44.

Ezek. 47.

3, 4

Arbor

prosera

Cypressus.

Mat. 12. 20

Phil. 1. 6.

1 Thess. 5.

34.

Heb. 6. 1.

Luke 14.

28, 29.

Pl. 138. 8

2 Pet. 1. 1

viz. the Word and Spirit. A little grace is true grace. Fire in the spark is as well fire as the flame: the filing of gold is gold, as well as the whole wedge, a drop of water is water, as well as the whole Ocean. A little grace is true grace.

4. The End, it hath the same salvation of soul, 1 Pet. 1.9

5. God will not put your weak grace to trial beyond your strength; *God will debate with it in measure, he will stay his rough wind, in the day of his East-wind.*—Thou shalt not have such boisterous storms of temptation, as a stronger Christian. *God will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able.* God will take care that the spirit shall not fail.

6. Take this for your comfort, the least measure of grace is enough to bring you to Heaven. This is not spoken to make you idle, but only to comfort a perplexed conscience. Many because their grace is weak, they think they have no grace. *I have set before thee (saith Christ to the Church of Philadelphia) an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my name.* It is true, our comfort lies much in the comparative degree, but our salvation in the positive degree: strong grace hath strong comfort; much faith will bring thee with much comfort to Heaven; but a little faith will bring thee safely to Heaven.

11. 17. 18.

1 Cor. 10

15.

11. 37. 16

6

Rev. 3. 8.

E

I. KING



H:  
SERMON  
At Law-  
rence Jew  
Lond.  
1651.

I KINGS 14.  
part of the 13. Verse.

—Because in him there is found some good thing  
towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of  
Jeroboam.



Efore we come to the use of Caution, I shall  
here state a case of conscience, which is  
this, That if amongst Gods People there are  
some found that have but little grace, and but  
small measures in them; Then what is the  
least measure of grace, I say then which a  
man cannot be said to be in the state of grace?

A Case of  
Conscience  
resolved.

This is a practicall and usefull case.

First, this is of great use to Christians, who are but of  
a lower form in Religion, and have but little grace; yet  
they may know that little they have: and though they have  
not attained strength of grace; yet they may know the truth  
of grace in themselves: and although they come short of  
strong Believers, yet they shall hereby know they go beyond  
the Hypocrit; for the least measure of grace, is better then  
the greatest measures of gifts.

Secondly, the knowledge of this will quicken the soule  
unto due indeavours after a further increase. This will  
teach them to abound more and more.

1 Thes. 4. 1

Now that we may discover what is the lowest degree of  
true grace, we shall shew you it in some of these following  
particulars.

Psal. 119.

1. A light in the soule to see the evil and mischievous na-  
ture of sinne, though not an ability to mortifie sinne.  
The entrance of Gods Word giveth light, and giveth  
understanding to the simple, that is, the first work of  
the

the Word upon the soul, the very beginning of converting: grace in the heart is light, whereby thou seest sin and its infirmity. As it was in the first Creation, the first thing that was created was light: so in the second Creation, the first work to open the eyes of the blind, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Upon the work of Conversion in the soule, the first degree of grace is to be inlightened with the light of the living. So that where this light is wanting, there cannot be a work of grace.

3. A settled and fixed purpose of heart to leave sin, and to cleave unto God.—Grace doth not consist so much in an actual mortifying of sin, as in an unfeigned and settled purpose of heart to leave every sin.

The Prodigals resolution to go to his fathers house, argued some grace in him. *I will arise and goe to my fathers house, that is, I will leave my wicked company and courses: and it is said, His father saw him afar off, and ran and met him.* The Lord God did work in him a purpose to leave his sin. Gregory on this place saith, *The Remission of sin came to his heart before his Confession brake out in his speech to his father.* So David, *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said I will confesse my transgression unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sinne.* Augustine observes on this place, *That David doth not say he did confesse, but he purposed to confesse his sin; and yet this his purpose was true grace, though one of the least measures of grace.* That holy purpose of David, argued grace in him, when he said, *I have purposed and will not transgress thy Law; I have sworn and will performe it, that I will keep thy righteous judgements.* It argues grace when a soul doth cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart.

3. Another low measure of grace is this; A sensible complaint of the want of grace. Thus he that came to Christ, and said with tears, *Lord I beleve, help thou my unbelieve,* he had grace. He doth not say, *Lord help my faith;* but *Lord help my unbelieve.* His expression about his unbelieve, did note not only his want, but his sensibleness of his want. This is that *Poverty of Spirit*, which hath the first place in the beatitudes; this is the lowest round of the Lad-

AR. 16,  
18.

Iob. 33. 30

Luk. 15. 17  
18.

Greg.

Psal. 32. 5.

August.

Psal. 17. 3.  
Psal. 119. 106.

AR. 11. 23.

Mar. 9. 24.

Mat. 5. 3.



Rom. 8. 26

Perkins.  
Cory loves  
loquuntur,  
ingratis  
sugere.

der. The Apostle tells us, *That the Spirit helps our infirmities, in sighs and groans that cannot be uttered.* Observe here, that it's not said the spirit helps us with comforts and joyes, but with *sighs and groans*; whence we may learn, that the spirits help is as well *in sighs and groans*, and sensible complaints of our wants, as in holy ravishments. Strength of grace is seen in holy joys and ravishments of spirit, but truth of grace may be seen and discerned in sighs, groans, and complaints of our wants; they are said to be *sighs and groans which cannot be uttered*, not in regard of their greatness; but (as Master Perkins observes) in regard of their weakness. Gods children at first wanting ability to expresse their owne thoughts. To be sensible of the want of grace is grace; for nature cannot make a man duly sensible of the want of grace, nor sensibly to complain of that want.

Nehem. 1  
11. compa-  
red with  
Nehem. 5.  
13.

4. Earnest desire after more grace, argues there is grace in the soul, though it be but small. I doe not place the beginning of grace in ability to exercise grace; but rather in an earnest desire after grace. Desire after grace, is accounted by God the grace it self we desire; for so we find that Nehemiah's desire to fear the Lord, is counted for actually fearing God. Desires are the seeds of grace, and the graces themselves are the blossoms and sweet fruit that spring from thence; grace exercised is the fruit of a holy desire after grace.

That the desires after grace is in Gods acceptation grace, may be thus demonstrated.

Isa. 26. 8, 9

1. Gods people have appealed unto God, concerning the uprightnes of their hearts, meely by their desires; ———— so saith the Church, *The desire of our soule is to thy name, and the remembrance of thee; and with my soule have I desired thee in the night.*

Mat. 5, 6

Eph. 7. 37.

Isa. 55. 1.

Rev. 21. 6.

2. God hath made many gracieous promises, not only to the asking and exercising of grace, but to the desires after grace. *Blessed are they that doe hunger and thirst after Righteousnesse; for they shall be filled.* ———— *If any man thirst (saith Christ) let him come unto me and drink; may there is a general and universal invitation to every one that thirsteth, to come to the waters; and God hath promised to give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.* The Lord

hath

hath also promised to fulfil the desire of those that fear him, and wil bear the desire of the humble. So that by these promises it doth appear, that hungry and thirsting, and desires after grace, are grace in Gods account and acceptation.

1. They are supernatural desires. 'Tis true, there are natural desires in the soul after that which is good—it is the language of nature, *Who will shew us any good?* now these desires may and doe arise from the motion of the natural and unsanctified wil of man; and these desires are after happiness, and not after holiness; such were the desires of Baalam, who said, *Let me die the death of the Righteous, and let my last end be like his.* This was but a natural desire. But true desires in the soule are after heaven, for holiness sake. Bernard notably sets out their desires of natural men—*That they have a desire of the End, and not of the Means.*

2. Desires after grace are joyned with holy indeavours; and therefore the Apostle joyns desire and zeal together; so intimate that true desires are always joyned with zealous indeavours. Thus the Apostle also joyned a readiness of wil, and performance together. God will never accept the wil for the deed, unless there be an indeavour to perform, what we say we are willing to do. And therefore Solomon rightly describes, how pernicious desires are without indeavours. *The desires of the slothful (saith he) killeth him, because his hands refuse to labour.* Bernard describes this laziness to the life: *Carnall men love to obtain, but love not to follow Christ, they will not endeavour to seek him whom they desire to find.*

3. Desires which are true and gracious are unsatisfiable; thus David speaks of his desires; *My soule (saith he) breaketh for the longing it hath to thy judgements at all times;* yea he further describes the ardency and unsatisfiability of his desires by the Harts panting after the water-brooks. The Hart is naturally the most thirsty of all creatures, but this thirst is much increased, when the poor beast is chased with dogs; even so the true desires of the soul after grace are earnest, ardent and vehement desires.

4. You may know true desires after grace by their Object. Desires they are not gracious, if they be more after outward things than after God. So David, *My soule thirsteth after God, after the living God.* My soule thirsteth for thee,

Pf. 145. 19.  
Psal. 10. 17

Psal. 4. 6.

Numb. 23.  
10.

*Voluntatem finis, non medicum.* Bern.  
2 Cor. 7. 11

2 Cor. 8.  
11.

Prov. 21.  
25.  
*Carnales cupiunt Christum consequi, sed non sequi, non curant quare quem desiderant invenire.* Bern

Psal. 119.  
70  
Psal. 42. 1.  
2 Cor. 7. 11

Psal. 42. 1.  
Psal. 63. 1.

Psal. 119.  
20.

*my flesh longeth after thee, in a dry and thirsty Land where no water is.* Thus his soul longed, *and did break* with longing after Gods judgements—Now therefore wouldest thou know whether thou hast any beginning of grace in thy soul, examine what thy desires are; perhaps thou canst not pray, but thou desirest to pray: perhaps thou canst not mourn for sin, but dost thou mourn that thou canst not mourn? perhaps thou dost not beleve, (as thou fearest) but dost thou desire to beleve? perhaps thou canst not repent, but dost thou desire to repent? and dost thou labour to repent? then thou maist conclude that thou hast some beginnings of true grace in thy soul.

1 Pet. 2.2.

5. We may know the truth of grace though it be little, by the earnest desire after the Word and the means of grace. —Thus Peter sets forth our desires, *As new born Babes, desire the sincere milke of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.* There is in a child a naturall instinct as soon as ever it is born, to desire after the mothers breast. The Apostle makes it a resemblance of a spiritual man; A man spiritually new born will desire after the Word, the means of grace, that he may grow in grace.

1 Ioh. 3.14

6. An indeared love to those that have grace. *By this you know you are past from death to life, because you love the Brethren.* Casuists upon this text, say, that love to Gods children is the first grace, and first appears in young Converts. The Natives in New-England, it is observed upon their Conversion, (for God hath begun there, to bring some of those poor creatures from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to himselfe) the first appearance of grace in them, is in their love and respect to those that are truly gracious. Thus I have shewed you an answer to the question, what are the least measures of grace, without which or some of them, a man cannot be said to have grace; and where-soever any of these are, that mans condition is safe, and these little measures of grace will bring a man to Heaven.

I shall here lay down some Cautions to prevent mis-application.

1. Cauti-  
on.

Though these smal measures of grace are saving, yet you must not content your selves with them. Take heed, lest what I have said, for the support of the weaknes of some  
Chri-

Christians, become not a pillow for the idleness of others; *But let us strive to goe on unto perfection.* We must not sit down with any measure of grace. And to perswade you here-unto;

Heb. 6.<sup>1</sup>

1. Consider, that things meerly necessary and sufficient to maintain a natural life will not content a man; what man is content, though he hath clothes enough to hide his nakedness, and food enough to keep life and soul together,——but he desires not only clothes for nakedness, but ornament, and only food for hunger and necessity, but delight? Now shall men be unbounded after their desires for outward things, and shall they sit down and say they have enough for heavenly things?

2. Consider, if thou contentest thy selfe with a smal measure of grace, though thou shalt have the fruit of thy grace when thou diest, yet thou wilt want the comfort of thy grace whilst thou livest. It is strength of grace that gives assurance, weak grace will bring thy soul to Heaven, but it is the strength of grace will bring Heaven into thy soul. *The worke of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the effect of Righteousnesse shall be quietnesse and assurance for ever.* A child of God hath seldom peace and comfort from the habit of Righteousness, but from the exercise of Righteousness. *He that lacketh these things (saith Peter) is blinded and cannot see afar off, &c.* This is not spoken of wicked men who have no grace, but of such who have grace: and because they exercise it not, doe not discern the comfortable fruits of grace in their souls. A little faith unexercised is as to comfort (as we have shewed) as good as no faith——They that adde not to the stock of grace, will want the comfort of grace. So that a weak Christian who is compared by Peter to a pur-blind man: *He cannot see* (because the ey-sight of his faith is weak) *afar off*; Hee cannot see his name writ in Heaven;——He will want the comfortable evidence of grace in his heart, who contents himselfe with measures of grace.

Isa. 33. 17.

2 Pet. 1. 9,  
10, 11.

Mar. 8. 26.  
*comprised*  
with Mar.  
4. 40.  
2 Pet. 1. 9.  
*muonac*  
*Corin.*

The second Caution is, Take not those things to be evidences of the truth of grace, which are evidences only of the growth and strength of grace. *Weak Converts* doe involve themselves in a Labyrinth of misery, in judging themselves by those symptoms which are evidences only of the strength of grace. Thou must not judge thy selfe whether thou art

2. Caution.  
tion.

in the state of grace by this; as whether thou hast ~~receiving~~ joyes and comforts of the Holy Ghost; these are things that God induldgeth unto some few, and those of a long standing in the School of Christ. In a *School*, a Scholler must not compare himselfe with one of the highest Form: if thou wouldst judge of the truth of thy grace, judge by the lowest measure. The reason why Hypocrites, and low-Forme Christians do mistake, is this: Hypocrites judge they have grace because they have gifts, and weak Christians judge they have no grace, because they doe not find such measures of grace in them as are in others. We do not use to say, it is not day because it is not noon——It is unthankfulness to God, and uncharitableness to our selves, to argue a nullity of grace from the weakness of it; and therefore if thou canst not say I see my grace, yet it's well if thou canst say, Blessed be God I see my sin; if thou canst not say that thou leavest sin, yet it's well if thou canst say, I have a full purpose of heart to do so: if thou canst but cry out for the want of grace, yet comfort thy selfe, and doe not conclude thou hast no grace.

3. *Caution.*

Do not conclude you have small measures of grace, because you have but small measures of comfort; this is the fault of young Converts; they take measure of their grace by their comfort, which is a false and deceitfull rule; growth of grace is not to be measured by the working of joy: the sweet blossom of joy may fall off, when the fruit of grace may come on; yea sometimes Christians of the greatest measure of grace, may have the least measure of comfort; and all to let us know, that as the being and exercise, so the comforts of our graces, come from free grace. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was anointed above his fellowes, and was full of grace and truth, yet in the time of his desertion was without comfort, when by reason of the suspension of the favour of God his Father, he cryed out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* And so sometimes Christians, that have but little measures of grace, may have much comfort; and this is the reason of that flash of joy that young Converts have; it is Gods indulgence towards them, to give them great joy at their first Conversion; and indeed their joy at that time is the more taken notice of, because usually such have



have much trouble of mind when they passe through the pangs of the new birth, the change is then specifical, which afterwards is but gradual : and so though they have afterwards more grace, more settled joyes and comforts, yet at their first Conversion they may have more sense of their joyes, though afterwards they may find an increase of grace, when joy may be as real though not so sensible; and therefore doe not judge thy grace by thy comfort.

Do not conclude the measure of thy grace little, because thou hast but a little measure of gifts. Gifts are the issues of time and experience; and the fruits of studies advantaged by the strength of naturall parts. A man may have a quick and pregnant invention, a profound judgement, a retentive memory, a clear elocution and the like, and yet none of these things can be arguments of grace, but all are but naturall endowments. Gifts may be high, and grace may be low : Thus it was with the Church of *Corinth*, they were *enriched with utterance and knowledge*, and they came behind other Churches in no gift; and yet the Apostle speaks of these very *Corinthians*, that they were very low in grace: for so he taxeth them, *1 Cor. 3. 1.* that they were not spiritual, but carnal men, *Babes in Christ*, that by reason of their envying, strife and divisions, they were carnal, and walked as men; thus the Church of *Laodicea* was rich and increased in gifts, and grew proud of it too, and yet for grace was poor, and naked, and blind, and miserable. It is with some Professors as it is with a well read Scholler, who having read many books of Geography and the Description of places, can discourse of them very well, but if he were to travell those Countries, of which he hath so often read, he would soon be at a loss:— So gifts may carry men far for matter of discourse about Religion, but it's only grace that inables a man to practise Religion. A child of God that hath but a little measure of gifts, may have for all that much grace. Of all the seven Churches of *Asia*, it is said of *Philadelphia*, that she had but a little strength, that is, but little strength of parts and gifts, and yet that Church was very eminent for grace; for she with as much, if not more faithfulnessse then the other Churches, did keep the Word of Christ's patience, and did not deny his name. Judge not therefore thy grace by thy gifts.

4. Caution.

1 Cor. 1. 5  
& v. 7

Rev. 3. 17

Rev 3. 8

1 Cor. 12.  
31.

1. Com-  
fort.

Luke 22.  
32.

1 Joh. 4. 4.

2 Cor. 12.

9.

Isa. 26. 4.

Jude 24.

1 Pet. 1. 5.

Heb. 7. 25.

ἡς τὸ πᾶν

τελεῖται, i.e.

perfecte &

perpetuus.

οὗ τὸ πᾶν

τελεῖται.

Non solum

perpetui-

tatem

temporis

significat,

ἀμάρτη;

sed omni-

modam

perfectio-

nem.

Gamer. in

Myr.

1 Cor. 1.

24.

ἡγοῦσθ

εἰ.

εἰ Rom. 6. 20

Cor. 1. 18.

Rom 1. 16.

2 Cor. 10.

45.

It is good to covet earnestly the best gifts, but the way of true grace (though but weak) is a more excellent way

I shall conclude this point with some further Consolation to the People of God, that have but weak measures of grace.

Though thou art but weak in thy selfe, yet thou hast much strength from without thee, or rather it is in thee, because of the spirit of Christ that dwels in their hearts, that do believe the Devil doth all he can to make a little faith faile—but Christ prayes, that it faile not. Great are the Confederacies of the world, the flesh and the devill, against thy little grace, but be of good comfort. Ye are of God, Little children (saith S. Iohn) and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the world: and the weaker thou art, the more advantage hath God to magnifie the glory of his power in thy weaknesse.

1. Comfort your selves ye weak Christians, for you have a strong God. In Jehovah is everlasting strength.—Your God is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultlesse before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. He is able by his Almighty power through faith to keep you unto salvation. —You have a strong God, fear not, his power will be magnified in your weaknesse.

2. You have a strong Saviour, though your grace is weake; yet hee is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.—Christ is the Wisdom and the Power of God to those that are called; Yea, he is called a strong Redeemer. Our Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is his name—Satan is indeed the Prince of the power of the air: for so he is called, Eph. 2. 2. but Iesus Christ is truly the great power of God, who is able, <sup>b</sup> because stronger then the strong man arm'd, to <sup>c</sup> bruise Satan under the feet of his Saints.

3. You lie under a strong Word, which is able to carry on the Work of grace, which is begun in you. The Word of God, though it be foolishnesse to them that perish, yet it is the power of God to them that are saved; yea it is an Engine, mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth it selfe against the knowledge of God, and bringeth in to Cap-

Cap-

Captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ : wherefore the Apostle prays. Now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all them which are sanctified; so that cheer up; though faith be weak, yet the Word of God is strong; it is that ingrafted Word which is able to save your souls; yea, in a word, The Word of God is profitable for Doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

4. You are weak, but you stand on a sure foundation. 1. It is a foundation. 2. A sure foundation. 3. It is the foundation of God. And 4. It is the foundation of God that cannot shake, but standeth firm. Now the weak Believer stands by the immutable decree of God, which here the Apostle calls the Foundation of God.

5. Weak Believers are assisted by a strong spirit. The spirit of God is not only a spirit of grace and supplication, but it is also a spirit of power. And therefore let weak Believers cheer up themselves, though they have but little grace, yet that little grace is upheld and maintained by the great power of God unto salvation:

The truth and essence of grace is not discern'd so much by good acts as by good affections.—How fair is my Love, my sister, faith Christ to the Spouse? God reckons of our beauty by our love, and of our perfection by the sincerity of our affections. Natural abilities, to which Formalists and Hypocrites may come up, may and doe resemble good actions, but they cannot come up to good affections. A Painter may paint the colour of the face, but his Art cannot give heat unto the picture. Good actions may give you the resemblance of a Christian: So what *Jehu* did, resembled a true Reformer; but they are good affections that doe set out the life and heat of true grace. Judge thy grace therefore by thy affections, and take comfort in this, though thou art little and low in actions, if thou art warm and working in thy affections.

The third and last comfort is this, That little grace shall be lasting grace. Adam had perfection, but had not perseverance; and (thou poor soul!) hast imperfection of grace,

AG. 10. 32

James. 3. 1.

2 Tim. 3.

16, 17.

1 Cor. 13.

1 Cor. 13.

1 Cor. 13.

2 Tim. 2.

19.

Lingula

verba pen-

dus habent,

certitudo

hæc niti-

tur primo

fundamento

secundo non

quocunque

sed firmo,

tertio non

hominis sed

Dei, quarto

non vacil-

lans sed

stans et

obtinens.

Dr. Pride-

aux.

Zech. 1. 10

2 Tim. 1. 7

In te stas et

non stas.

Aug.

2 Cor-

fort.

Cant. 4. 1.

3. and  
last Com-  
fort.

*Stella ca-  
dens non est  
bella.*

but haſt perfeverance in grace. The moſt violent and impetu-  
ous flood of corruption ſhall not quench the leaſt meaſure,  
the leaſt ſpark of true grace, the moſt boyſterous blaſt of  
temptation ſhall not extinguiſh this poor ſmoaking flax, not  
one drop of this divine oyntment ſhall be ſpilt as the water  
upon the ground. Comets may blaze a while, and then  
they fall; to ſhew that it was a Comet and not a Star.—  
True Stars doe not, cannot fall. Oh then bleſſe God, who  
though in his anger, *he breakes the Nations like a Potters veſſel  
with an iron mace*; yet ſuch is his tenderneſſe over weak Be-  
lievers, *he will not breake the bruised reed*; and though he put  
out the candle of the wicked, yet *he will not quench the ſmoak-  
ing flax*. The ſeeming graces of Hypocrites ſhall periſh and  
come to nothing, when true grace ſhall hold out——The  
painted face decayes ſoon, but the naturall complexion laſts.  
A child of God may be toſſed by reaſon of corruption and  
temptation in a troubleſome ſea, but that ſhip ſhall never  
be ſhipwrack't, whereof Chriſt is the Pilot, the Scriptur's  
the Compaſſe, the Promiſes the Tacklings, Hope the  
Anchor, Faith the Cable, the Holy Ghoſt the Winds, and  
Holy affections the Sails, which are filled thus with the  
gales of the ſpirit.—&c. *Fear not therefore little flocke;  
for it is your Fathers pleaſure to give you a Kingdom.*

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I. KING.

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## I KINGS 14.

## part of the 13. Verse.

—Because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.



Having finished the former part of the Doctrine about little measures of grace ; I come now to the second part, which is this, *That God doth exactly take notice, tenderly cherish, and graciously reward the least beginnings, and the smallest measures of grace in the hearts of his people.*

In the prosecution of which point, I shall proceed in this method.

1. I shall prove the truth of it.
2. I will also endeavour to give you the grounds hereof, and then make Application.

First, that God doth thus cherish the small beginnings of grace will appear, if we consider,

1. These Scriptures-instances, *Mat. 12. 20. Hee wil not quench the smoking flax,* that is, by the figure *Meiosis* (as I have shewn already) he will kindle it.—*He will not break the bruised reed,* that is, he will strengthen it.—God regards not the flame only, but the smoaking of grace ; not the ripe fruit, but the tender buds. Christ would have accepted of green figs of the fig-tree, though the time of ripe fruits was not yet come ; so some expound that place, *Mark. 11. 13.* Christ accepts not only *the honey*, but *the honey-combe* too, that is, say Expositors, *Not only the excellent services, but even the meaner services of his People ;* God takes notice of the cries of our heart, even the desires of the humble, even the

V.  
SERMON  
At Law-  
rence Wy,  
Lond.  
*Mar. 23.*  
1650

Second part  
of the do-  
ctrine.

*Mat. 12. 20*

*Gal. 2. 13.*

*Mar. 11. 13.*  
*Gal. 5. 1.*  
*Trap. in loc*

*Ex. 16. 15.*



1 Pet. 3. 6. most inward groanings of the soul; not a good word but God takes notice of it; nay, God takes not only notice of the least good that is in his people, but he eyes also the common good that is in such as have no grace; thus when the young man came to Christ, — though he had no true grace, yet it is said, *Iesus loved him*. And he took notice of that discreet answer of that Scribe mentioned by Saint Marke, *And said unto him, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of heaven*.

2. The truth of this point, may be made out by those sweet and gracious promises, God hath made to grace though weak. I will give you one instead of many, mentioned by the Prophet *Isaiah*, *He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd, he shall gather the Lambs with his arme, and carry them in his bosome, and gently lead those that are with young*.

3. By counsels that Christ giveth to us, how we our selves should carry our selves to those that are weak, viz. to use them with all tendernesse. — Now if God would have others, then surely himselfe will deale with weak Believers with much tendernesse.

Rom. 15. 1  
Psal. 103.  
16

1. God would have the strong to bear with the weak, to bear with *their infirmities*, and not to please *our selves*; and surely then God will bear with them, and forbear them. See *Psal. 103*.

Rom. 14. 1.

2. We are to receive them into our fellowship. — *Him that is weak in the faith receive you*. And surely God will not reject such out of communion with himself & Son.

Rom. 14.  
15. 21

3. We must doe nothing that will or may justly offend or grieve the weak. We must not *walke uncharitably*, and grieve *our brother with our meat*. We must not make him *stumble that is weak*.

1 Cor. 8. 12  
Gal. 6. 1

4. We should restore a weak Brother that is fallen, and put him in joynt againe, *with the spirit of meeknesse*; you that are spiritual, that is, strong Christians, *help up such as are fallen through weaknesse*.

2 Cor. 13. 1

Isa. 35. 3.  
Heb. 1. 2.  
12, 13

5. We must strengthen the weak hands, and confirme the feeble knees, and say to them that are of a fearful heart, *be strong*. We must help to lift up hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but rather that it be healed. We must

must not be like the Herd of Deer, who push away from them the poor wounded Deer, but we must endeavour the *healing of the wounded*, and *comforting the feeble minded*, and *support the weak*, be patient towards all men; Support the weak, i.e. Set your shoulder to bear them up, who would stand but are weak. — Hold them up as a Crutch doth a body that is lame: helps him to stand, who is for weakness like to fall. — Let your charity helps to hold them up, even as a beame holds up a house that is ready to fall. Now if God enjoin us to have all this care of those that are weak in grace, to cherish, support and comfort them, then surely the God of Mercy and Compassion, will be very carefull to cherish the smallest measures of grace, in the weakest Believers.

*Why doth God cherish the least measures of grace in his people?*

Because the least measure of grace is of a very great value; the least grace and least measure or degree of it, is the purchase of Christs blood, and the merit of his great sufferings. The smallest spark of a Diamond is precious; pearls and precious stones are but little for quantity, but great for quality and esteem. The least degree of grace is the Work of God, and God will not forsake his own Work. —

Little grace is of the same nature and excellency with the greatest degree of grace; for as the very filings of gold are of the same nature with gold, so the least measure of grace is grace. — The faith of all Believers is the same faith specifically, though not the same gradually, their faith is in all alike precious, but not alike strong.

Because God is the Author of weak grace as well as of strong — Solomon gives a good rule why the rich should not slight the poor, *Because God is the Author and Maker of them both*. And God will not slight the poor in spirit no more than those that are rich in grace, *For he is the Maker of them both*. It is an Argument to us why wee should not despise the poor, *because God made him*; And therefore surely much more because the Lord made the poor and weak Christian, *he will not despise, &c.*

*Job saith, He did not despise the cause of his man-servant*

1 Thes. 5.  
14.

*Assidue  
sublewa-  
te infirmos  
alioquin mi-  
tuor.*

Beza.

— *avib.*

*pro  
prie niten-  
tem, sed  
muntem, sed  
non suffici-  
entem, nec  
sat virium  
habentem  
adjuvare.*

C.A. Lib.

2. Quest.

1. Answ.

2. Answ.

2 Pet. 1. 3.

3. Answ.

Prov. 12. 2

Job. 31. 13

Job 31. 13

or maid-servant, and he gives a reason for it, *vers. 15.* Did not he that made me in the wombe, make him, and did not he fashion us in the wombe which holds as a very firm argument why the rich should not despise the poor, and so why the rich in grace should not despise those that are poor in grace; for God made and fashioned them both. Now what is a reason unto us, God is also pleased to make a reason unto himselfe, That he will not forsake what he hath formed; for so the Prophet *Isaiah*, The Lord that created thee O Jacob, and he that formed thee O Israel, fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy names; for thou art mine. And again, Thus saith the Lord that made thee and formed thee from the womb: feare not O Iacob my servant, and thou Iesurun whom I have chosen; yea though he be the worme Iacob, yet God that made him will not crush him, but cherish him. See a gracious promise made to those that have but little grace, upon this very ground, that God is the Author of that little grace. Thy People also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the Land for ever, the branch of my planting, the worke of my hand, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong Nation, I the Lord will hasten it in his time.

Isa. 43. 1.

Isa. 44. 2.

Isa. 60. 21, 22.

Psal. 138. 8

Job 10. 8

The Lord will perfect his worke that concerneth his People, i.e. He will perfect and encourage the least beginnings of grace, because Grace is his work in his servants. It is a very good argument in Prayer, O Lord forsake not the work of thy hands. And though in respect of outward things. God may destroy him whom his hands have made and fashioned, but it is otherwise in respect of Grace; God will not destroy any measure of grace which is the work of his hands. Property is the ground of love, care and tenderneffe: as a man will looke to a weak Child, because it is his Child, and will repaire a weak house, because it is the house wherein he dwels. And that is the third demonstration of Gods tender care over his people, that the meanest measure of grace shall not be deserted or forsaken, because God is the Author of it.

A fourth reason may be drawn from the covenant of grace, the nature and tenor whereof is to accept of sincerity in stead of perfection, desires for deeds, purposes for performances, pence for pounds, and mites for millions; and therefore God will accept and reward the least measure of grace, that is, in truth & sincerity. God requires of *Abraham*, when he renewed with him the Covenant of grace; *Be thou perfect*; (i.e. upright) & walk so before me, & I will be thy exceeding great reward.

To make some Application of this truth. we may from hence deduce these inferences following: If God doth cherish and will reward the smallest measure of graces;

Then it will follow, *That God takes notice of the smallest sins & punisheth them.* He that graciously eyes the very buddings of grace, will also justly eye the buddings of corruption in his own people. Thus he was ready to have slain *Moses*, for his neglect of circumcising his son; and thus the Lord made a breach upon *Azzab*, when he put forth his hand & stayed the shaking of the Ark. *You have I known* (saith God of his people,) *only of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* It is true, it is said, *The Lord beholds not iniquity in Jacob, neither sees perverseness in Israel*, — but this is not as the *Antinomians* glosse upon it, as if God did not see sin in his people, and is never displeased with their sins: But the meaning is, that God sees not sinne in his people, so as eternally to punish it. — And moreover, the most proper sense of that place is this, That whereas *Balak* hired *Balaam* to curse the people of *Israel*, and that false Prophet for the wages of unrighteousness was ready enough to have taken all occasions of cursing them, yet he could not fasten any curse upon them at that time, because there was no provoking sin amongst them; and therefore he gave *Balak* counsel to tempt them to sin, and so by the stumbling-block of the *Midianitish* women, he drew *Israel* to Idolatry and Adultery; and so made them fall. But God doth see sinne in his owne people, yea the least sin, yea he eyes their very failings, though not to damne them for them; yet to chastise them for them. God sees the purposes of sin, as well as the purposes of grace. It is said of *Balak*, that he arose and warred against *Israel*. Now we do not read that ever *Balak* did actually wage warre against *Israel*, onely he

3 *Answer.*

Gen. 17. 1.

&amp; 15. 1.

Gen.

*De villi-  
mis perfo-  
ris & im-  
maculatis  
discitur.**Uf.*1 *Inference.*

Exo. 4. 24.

2 Sam. 6. 7.

Amo. 3. 2.

Numb. 23.

21.

*Vide Gna-  
ker in loc.*

John. 14. 9.

did intend and purpose it, and for that end *sent and called Balaam the sonne of Beor to curse them.* and yet the Holy Ghost reckons upon his wicked purpose, as if he had accomplish'd it.

2 Inference,

Isa. 66, 1, 2.

Learne from hence, that the same minde should be in Christians of greater growth to the weak, as was in Christ Jesus. Who though he be higher then the highest, yet he looks upon the poor and lowly without disdain, and so should we. *The heaven is the throne, and the earth is the footstool of the Lord,* and yet this great God will not despise the weakest Saint, but *will look even to him that is poore and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his word.* He will look on the poor, weak, trembling soule, and shall we look off from such with pride and disdain, and set such at our footstool? shall Christ give the Lamb in his Scutchion, and wilt thou give the Lion? shall he like a Lambe be meek and gentle, and thou like the Lion be stout, haughty and stately, that contemnes all the beasts of the Forrest? Oh be not you supercilious and contemptuous towards weak Christians, who are injured and discouraged by strong Christians.

Mat. 9, 16,  
17.

1. When they are put upon such austerities of Religion as are farre beyond their strength and growth. When these poor, torn, tottered & rent bottles are put upon to hold new wine, alas poor soules they are discouraged; wherefore Christ proportions his Doctrine to their capacities, and will not say that to them which they cannot at present bear, and so proportions out their duties to their abilities, and will not out-march their strength with his commands. Fasting and suffering was a hard duty, and therefore he will excuse them till they have had more time and more experience in the wayes of God, till the Holy Ghost come down upon them, and they have more grace; which is a good rule for us, not to discourage yong beginners in the school of Christ, not to put them to read such Authors as are above their capacities.

2. When strong Christians are too sharp and rigorous in bitter reprooves, for the failings and infirmities of weak Christians. Young Converts like young twigs must be gently handled, else you will break them; you must excuse their failings, hide their wants, commend their performances, cherish



cherish their forwardness, resolve their doubts, beare their burdens, and by this gentleness bring them into a love of Religion, that they may not distaste it as soon as they know it.

3. By setting light by their gifts. Alas, how soone is the smaking Flax quenched, by the too much superciliousness of those that thinke themselves bright Torches? How easily is the poore sparke of grace trod out by the foot of pride?

4. By puzzling them with doubtfull Disputes, contrary to that of the Apostle, *Him that is weak in the faith receive*, but not unto doubtfull disputations.

5. By giving them ill example. Weake Christians are more apt to be led by example then by precept. When Peter, who was a Pillar in the Church, and a strong Christian, for fear of Persecution forsook the Gentiles, and separated and withdrew himselfe, then others of the Jewes, (which in all likelihoode were weak Christians) dissembled also. Thus Paul argues, to abstaine from giving ill example, about the eating the Idolatry; *if any man see thee which hath knowledge, i. e. who art a strong Christian, sit at meat in the Idols Temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak, be emboldened to eat those things that are offered to Idols?*

And therefore let Christians learne from God, to cherish the weak beginnings of grace in the people of God. Look not on me, saith the Church, because I am blacke, because the Sun hath looked upon me. i. e. look not on me with a lofty and disdainfull look, and with a coy countenance; and then the Church addes, *My mothers children were angry with me*, that is, other Congregations and People did disesteem and disdain me for my infirmity. — But this should not be so amongst Christians, but the strong should cherish the weake. Angels despise not the poorest Christians; but doe minister unto them.

Learn from hence, how God doth by leasure and degrees, cary on in the hearts of his people the work of grace unto further perfection. Mushrooms and such like worthlesse things, like *Jenas* his Gourd may spring up in one night; but things of most moment, are of longest growth before they come to perfection. The Elephant amongst the Beasts,

Rom. 14. 1

Gal. 2. 12,  
13.

Heb. 1. ult

3 Inference.

Isa. 61. 3.

Verse 11.

2 Use of  
Caution.2 Caution.  
Zech. 4. 6Use of  
Comfort.

Mat. 3. 12

Luk. 22. 31

and the Oak amongst the Trees, and man amongst the rationall creatures, are longest before they grow up to their full and perfect dimensions. And as it is in nature, so it is in grace; there is a progresse from lesse to greater: all this work is by degrees. The godly are called *Trees of Righteousness*, and yet this is by degrees. There is first the budding forth of the earth, and then those things that are sowne spring forth, &c. v. 11. And therefore let young Converts learne from hence not to be discouraged. Gods works both of nature and grace are perfected by degree.

1. Though God regards the least measure of grace, let not this make you regardlesse to grow in grace. In the first Creation, God said to the Creatures, *Increase and multiply*, and by vertue of that word the earth brings forth to this day. Now it is so in the new and second Creation; the LORD expects that our grace should increase and multiply.

2. Though you have but a little grace, yet doe not despise it, or disparage it — *O doe not despise the day of small things in thy soul. Doe not tread upon the bunch of Grapes, upon the new Wine in the cluster, but say, there is a blessing in it.* Doe not despise a little grain of mustard-seed, it will grow to a tree; true grace is a spark of heaven, doe not tread it out; despise not the least, and be not satisfied with the greatest measure of grace.

1. Let this comfort thy poor soule (O weak Christian!) whose burden it is, that thou hast much corruption, and but little grace. God will look over a great deale of sinne, and will take notice of the least grace. God will not in refining his gold and silver lose one dram of grace, though it lye among a heap of Rubbish. Christ is said, *to have his Fan in his hand, he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his Garner.* Now the use of a Fan is to cast out the worst, and keep in the best, to drive away the Chaffe and save the Wheat: So Christ, though he purge out the chaffe of corruption, yet he will save and preserve every gain of grace. It is otherwise with the Devils Sieve. Christ tells Peter, *That Satan desired to sift him.* Now the use of the Sieve is contrary to the Fan, for that keeps the waste, and lets out the best. The Devill doth all he can

to destroy our grace, and to increase our sinne. But 'tis otherwise, God will kill the corruptions and cherish thy graces, and if the least grace be in the soule, though with a mixture of much corruption God, will not despise it.

1. God carries the most tender regard to those that are weak in grace; the weak child is still carried in our arms, and the weakest of the flock the good Shepherd will carry in his bosome. Christ gave Peter charge in the first place to feed his Lambs.

2 Comfort.

Isa. 40. 11.  
John 21.  
15.

1. Gods care over weak Christians is such, that he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able, but with temptation will make a way to escape, that they shall be able to beare it. God doth consider we are but dust; and the wise Physician of our soules will mercifully weigh every grain of every dose, and will not outmatch their strength whose strength is small.

2. God will not put them on difficult Duties at the first. Christ taught his Disciples such Doctrines as their weakness could beare.

3. God will beare with their Infirmities; he teacheth his children to go, and holds them up by the armes.

Hos. 11. 1  
3.

V.I.  
SERMON  
At Law-  
rence Jew,  
Lond. Mar.  
30.  
1651.

## 2 TIM. 2. 1.

*Be strong in the Grace of God that is in Christ  
Jesus.*



Having lately handled the Doctrine of the small beginnings, and the least measures of true grace, and shewne you how God will accept and reward them, by opening to you that passage in 1 Kings 14. 13.—Concerning Jeroboam's Sonne, in whom there was found some good.—

And lest that Doctrine should accidentally (through the corruption of our deceitfull hearts) beget in us spirituall sloth, and satisfaction in weak degrees of grace; therefore I shall prosecute my Discourse concerning the degrees of grace; and shew you, that though God regards weak grace, yet we must all labour to obey this Apostolicall injunction, *to be strong in the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus.*

In the whole verse you have three parts.

1. A loving Compellation, *My Son.*
2. A pressing Exhortation, *Be strong in grace.*
3. The reason of it in the Illative, *Therefore.*

1. For the Compellation. *Quere,* How *Timothy* could be *Paul's Sonne*, for his father was a Greeke, but *Paul* was a Jew of the Tribe of Benjamin? *Timothy* then was not *Paul's Son* in the flesh, but in the faith. Now

A further question is, *Why is he called Paul's Son.*

*Baldwin* gives this reason, *Because* (sayes he) *Paul* begat him to the faith, alledging that in 1 Cor. 4. 17. compared with verse 14. where *Paul* calls the *Corinthians*, whom hee had converted to the faith, his beloved *sonnes*, verse 14. and so hee call

Acts 16. 2.  
Phil 3. 5.  
1 Tim. 1. 2

1 Cor. 4. 17  
compared  
with verse  
14.

calls *Timothy*, verse 17. But *Timothy* was not *Pauls* sonne in that sense: for as *Estius* shewes, he was converted long before *Paul* knew him, by the godly instructions of his *Grand-mother Lois*, and his *Mother Eunice*.

The true reasons, why *Paul* called *Timothy* his son, were,

1. Because *Paul* was aged, and *Timothy* young, and it was usual for the old to call the younger sons.
2. Because he confirmed him in the faith.
3. Because he loved him as a son, and *Timothy* loved *Paul* as a father.
4. Because as a sonne with the father he served *Paul* in the Gospel.

Before I come to the maine Doctrines, let me observe something in the passage to it: upon these reasons *Paul* calls *Timothy* his sonne: From the Compellation, *My Sonnet*, Observe,

1. That Ministers should use loving insinuations towards their hearers, to utter in usefull instructions.

Soft words turne away wrath, and hard flints are broken upon soft pillows. This was *Pauls* practice here and elsewhere; he gained their affections the better to reform their judgements.

2. And then in that he calls him *My Son*, in relation to him'selfe as a father; Observe,

That Religion puts men into the nearest union and the most indeared relations. They who are glued together in the blood of Christ, are knit together in the strongest bonds.

Now from the reason of the duty, *Therefore my sonne, &c.* Expositors doe vary what this Illative particle hath a reference to: Some make it to refer to v. 7. of the foregoing chapter, and to *Estius*, *God hath not given us the spirit of feare, but of power, of love, and of a sound minde*; and it so,

Then observe, — That the receiving the first degrees of grace, should be a swaying reason to move us to grow in grace.

Others referre it to *Pauls* example, v. 8. or to the example of *Onesiphorus*, v. 16. from whence may be observed,

That the good example of good men, should be an argument to us to increase in goodness.

If it refer to the 15. verse. *This thou knowest that all they*

2 Tim 1.5

2 Tim. 3.

15.

Phil. 2.22.

1 Observ-  
vation.

2 Observ.

Sanguine  
Christi con-  
glutinat.  
Salvian.

3 Observ.

4 Observ.



which are in Asia be turned away from me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes; and thus Theodoret refers it: Then observe,

3 Observ.

That other mens Apostacy from the profession of grace, should make the godly more carefull to grow strong in grace. But I shall handle the Text without any relative considerations.

Explication of the text.

Rom. 1. 5.  
Eph. 3. 8.

*Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.*] Timothy may be considered in a double capacity, either as a Minister, or as a private Christian; if as a Minister, then the force of the exhortation lies in this; that he should increase in ministeriall gifts and graces; whence may be observed,

6 Observ

That Ministers of all men should grow in the truth, and in ministeriall gifts; because as they grow, so will the people grow under their Ministry. Ministers doe receive grace and Apostleship for obedience to the faith among all Nations, Rom. 1. 5. —

*And grace is given unto them that they may preach unto others the unspeakable riches of Christ,* Eph. 3. 8.

7 Observ.

2. If he be considered as a private Christian, then he is exhorted not to content himself with grace received, but to labour after more strength of grace. —

*Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.*] Grace may be said to be in Christ two wayes, either

1. As the subject recipient of grace, or

2. As a Fountaine redundant and over-flowing to his people.

John 1. 16

Grace is in Christ in all fulness, from whence his people receive grace for grace.

There are two Observations which I shall note from the words, considering the exhortation, without reference to what went before, or follows after.

Doct. 1.

*That Believers are not to rest satisfied in weak measures of grace already received, but to endeavour to attaine greater strength of grace.*

Doct. 2.

*That Christ is the subject in which all grace is, and the fountaine from which believers must receive all their grace.*

In the opening of the first Doctrine, the first thing is to make it appear, *That believers must not rest satisfied with weak measures of grace received, but must labour after more grace.* And this I shall prove, 1. By

1. By instances of two sorts, 1. That Believers have growne from weak grace to strong grace, *who out of weaknes were made strong*. There are Expositors that referre this place to Hezekiab's recovery, 1 Kings 20. — but it may have a more generall extent and application. The Psalmist speaking of Gods people, (sayes he) *They gee from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appears before God*; It is true, the proper reference of these words, is to the Jews going up to Jerusalem to worship, when the males went thrice a yeare up to Jerusalem to worship, according to the Law, Exod 23. 14, 17. yet Ainsworth understands it of our growth in grace; so we are said to be changed from glory to glory, that is, from little degrees of grace to greater; grace is but *glory begun*, and *glory* is but *grace perfected*; true grace is still aspiring unto perfection, and therefore sayes Paul, *if by any means I might attaine the resurrection of the dead*, his meaning is, that I may attain that perfection of holiness which accompanies the state of the Resurrection: a Metonymy of the subject for the adjunct; he is still pressing forward that he might attaine further degrees of grace; and for that end Paul, he *forgate what was behinde, and reached forth to those things that were before*, verse 13. And though Paul, Eph. 3. 4. had very great knowledge in the mysterie of Christ, yet he still desired to know more and more of Christ.

Heb. 11. 34

Psal. 84. 7.

2 Cor. 3.

18.

Phil. 3. 11.

2. By instances, wherein Gods people have prayed for the strength of grace. *I bow my knees (says Paul) unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant unto you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthned with might by his spirit in the inner man*. And speaking of the Romans, Rom. 15. 13, 14. (sayes he) *I am perswaded you are full of goodness and knowledge*; yet, because the best and most learned know but in part, and see but darkly thorow a glasse, 1 Cor. 13. 12. he prays that God would fill them with all joy and peace in believing, that they might abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; So he prays, that their love might abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgement; and that they might be filled with the knowledge of his Will, in all wisdom and spirituall understanding, that they might walke worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, and be fruitfull in every good worke;

Eph. 3. 16.

Rom. 15.

13, 14.

Phil. 1. 9.

Col. 1. 9.

10.

*increasing in the knowledge of God.* Thus Gods people have prayed for a further increase in grace. *Paul* after his Conversion increased more in strength, whereby he was enabled to confound the opposing Jewes at *Damascus*, Acts 9. 22.

2 *Prooffe.*

Heb. 6. 1.

2 Pet. 1. 5.

Eph. 6. 10.

1 Cor. 16.

13.

1 Thef. 4. 1

1 Cor. 13.

ult.

2. By Commands. Leaving the first Principles of the doctrine of Christ, we must goe on to perfection; we must give diligence to adde grace to grace; so we are commanded to be strong in the Lord, to stand fast in the faith, to quit our selves like men and be strong, and to abound more and more; many such commands are scattered up and down the Scripture, which shews our duty to grow more and more, and to attain unto greater measure of grace.

Prov. 4. 18

Pfal. 18.

35, 36.

2 Sam 18.

30.

It is his for

the side &

spirituall

the David

predica-

tor. Par.

Adverfar

2 Quest.

Ansiv.

3. By Promises, that Gods People shall do so. *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day*, that is, they shall increase more and more in strength. Gods gentlenesse makes his people great, and enlargeth their steps under them. The feeble among them at that day shall be as *David*, and the house of *David* shall be as *God*, as the Angel of the Lord before them. *Pareus* in his short notes, which he calls his *Adversaria*, saith, *He that is weak in faith, shall be as David, strong in faith.*

*Why should believers not rest satisfied with the first beginnings of grace, but labour to be growne and strong Christians?*

The Reasons may be drawne, 1. Partly from the necessity of it, *Why you must do it.* And 2. From the danger, *If you doe it not.*

1. From the necessity of it, there are these Reasons;

Reasf. 1.

Eph. 6. 10,

11, 12.

1. If you consider the strong temptations you are like to meet withall from the Devill. We are therefore commanded to be strong in the Lord; to put on the whole Armour of God, that we might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we warfare not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities and Powers, and against the Rulers of the darkness of this world. Now shall the devill be strong and armed, and shall we be content to be unarmed and weak Christians? It is worth your noting in the Epistle of *John*, (sayes he) *I write unto you young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.* But when he writes to children, he sayes, *I write unto you, because your sins*

1 John 14.

Verse 12.

are forgiven for his names sake, intimating that though weak grace be sufficient to evidence to us the pardon of sinne, yet it is strong grace that is able to overcome the temptations of the devill. The devill shall not overcome the weakest measure of grace, but the stronger our grace is, the more able we are to resist and overcome that enemy of our salvation. The devill is called, *a roaring Lion, whom we must resist, stedfast in the faith*; it is not weak faith which is able to grapple with the devill, therefore ought we to be growne and strong Christians.

1 Pet. 5. 8, 9  
589. 101.

2. If we consider the strong opposition we are like to meet with from the world; we may be put upon it as *Paul, to fight with beasts*; such manner of unreasonable men we may meet withal, and therefore we are commanded to *watch and to stand fast in the faith, to quit our selves like men and be strong*, and the reason is given *verse 9*. There are many Adversaries we are like to meet with; and therefore we had need to pray with the Psalmist, *to be strenght'ned and saved by the right hand of the Lord*. Weak faith, it is not fit to be in a crowd of opposition; and therefore we should labour to grow strong in the grace of God.

Reas. 2.  
1 Cor. 15.  
32.

Ch. 16. 13.

Pla. 138. 3,  
7.

3. We have many strong corruptions in our hearts, which weak grace will never be able to mortifie; strong passions, strong lusts, and how shall weak grace be able to grapple with, and have a conquest over these? If thy graces are weak when thy corruptions are strong, thou wilt be miserably foiled by thy corruptions; therefore pray for strength'ning and assisting grace, whereby thou maist be able, not only to resist, but to subdue and mortifie the strongest lusts and passions in thy heart.

Reas. 3.

Another ground of the Doctrine is taken from the danger, if you grow not strong in grace. As

1. Others that made Profession of Religion after you, in time will goe before you in measures and degrees of grace: so it is said, *That many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first*. Those who were first in the profession of the Gospel, shall be last in the degrees and measures of grace, because they have not improved grace to a further increase of it.

Mat. 19.  
30. compared with  
Mat. 20.  
12, 16.  
Non progressus est gradus.

2. If thou dost not grow strong in grace, thou wilt be sure to decay, and to grow weaker: for not to goe forward

2 Pet. 1. 8.  
Rev. 3. 2--

in grace, is to goe backward. Grace may be lost in some degree, and as to its exercise and comfort, though not to its being; and therefore sayes the Apostle, *If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful*; intimating that you will be barren if you do not adde grace to grace. Weak things, if they be not watched over and strengthened, will be ready to dye.

3.

Though thou canst not lose the being of thy grace, yet thou wilt lose the comfort of it, and thou maist be in as much trouble and perplexity as if thou hadst no grace at all. It's true, weak grace will bring thy soule to heaven, but it's onely strong grace which will bring heaven into thy soul. Little grace is like a little mote, which is not seen because it is little. Little grace is as it were no grace, as that man in the Gospel, he calls his faith unbelief: *Lord (says he) help my unbelief.* Weaknesse of grace makes mens perswasions of Gods love to be presumption, their zeale to be lukewarmnesse, their grace to be but gifts, and as here their faith to be but unbelief. It is strong grace which gives gladnesse of heart, and hope in God; therefore sayes *Jeremiah*, *My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord.* When strength in grace decays, then hope and comfort decays also.

Mar. 9. 24.

Lam. 3. 18.

It is the Apostles prayer in the Inscription of many of his Epistles, *that grace and peace may be multiplied*: If therefore you doe not increase your graces, you will neither increase nor keep your comforts. *He that lacketh these things, is blinde* (sayes the Apostle *Peter*) *and cannot see afar off*; It is not meant of a totall lack of grace (as hath been shewn:) for, as after it is expressed, he is purged from his old sinnes, though he forgets it, having lost the sense of pardon for want of adding grace to grace.—

2 Pet. 1. 9.

4.

Weak grace under great trials will expose a man to doubts and falls, as if he had no grace at all; little grace will keep a man in small trials, but not in greater. Little grace as to the strait a man may be in, may be as good as no grace; and therefore when the Disciples were at sea, and a great tempest arose, *insomuch that they were afraid*; that which in *Matthew* is said to be *little*, in *Mark* is said to be *no faith*. Intimating, that as to that particular exigency and strait they were in, their little faith did stand them in no more stead, then if they

Mat. 8. 26.  
compared  
with Mar.  
4. 40.  
Mat. 14. 31  
Verse 29.



they had had no faith at al. So *Peter*, Christ calls him *δαίμωνιος* ;  
 Because though he began to walke upon the wayes, yet v.  
 29 *VVhen the winds grew boisterous, he was afraid and be-  
 gan to sinke. Peter did not sink into the sea, before his faith  
 began to sinke in his soule. He that faints in the day of  
 Adversity, it argues that his strength is small, so saith So-  
 lomom.*

Fro. 24.10

Use.

*I should now proceed to a second particular, and that is  
 to give some Scripture-notes of that man who is growne  
 in grace; — but let me shut up this Sermon with a just  
 and sharp reproofe of many Professors in our time, who go  
 from one Ordinance to another, and yet make little progress  
 or increase in Religion. They may be fitly compared to a  
 company of Ants, who are very busie about a Mole-hill, and  
 runne to and fro, but never grow great : Even so we have  
 many Christians, they runne from one Church to another,  
 from one Preacher to another, and it may be from one opi-  
 nion to another, but never grow up in true grace, and in the  
 true knowledge of Jesus Christ : — But I shall meet with  
 such people hereafter in this discourse.*

VII.  
SERMON  
At Lym-  
vexce July  
Lond. Mar.  
30.  
1651.

Doct.

Quest.

1. *Answ.*  
1 Joh. 4. 18  
Non ita  
pellitur ti-  
mor quin  
animos no-  
stros sollici-  
tet, sed ita  
pellitur ut  
non tu-  
bet  
neque im-  
pediat pe-  
ccata no-  
stram Cal-  
vin.

2 TIM. 2 1.

—My Son, be strong in the Grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.—



Having in the former Chapter observed from the Apostolical injunction to *Timothy*, which is obligatory to all Christians;

*That it is the duty of all Believers not to rest satisfied in weak measures of grace which they have received, but they are to endeavour to attain unto greater strength of grace.*—

This point we have proved both by Scripture-instance, as also by severall reasons. Now I proceed to answer to this question, viz.

*What are the notes the Scripture layes down of strong and grown Christians?*

We are to know there are marks in Scripture, both of the truth of grace, as also of the strength of grace, and these must not be confounded, but distinctly considered. Our present question is about marks of growth in grace.

1. Such as are grown in grace, doe ordinarily enjoy a grounded assurance, and comfortable manifestation of the love of God in Christ to their souls. So St. *John* saith, *Perfect love casteth out feare*: The more perfect love is, the lesse of tormenting feare is in the soule, and the reason of our feare and doubting is for want of love. We cannot comprehend the great love of God in Christ to our soules, till we are strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; which you will see in the Apostles prayer for the *Ephesians*, *That God would grant unto them according to the riches of his*

glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit; that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they might be rooted and grounded in love: And that they might be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, &c. So that the more strength of grace is in the soule, the clearer is our comprehension of Christs love to the soul.

2. Strong and growne Christians are able experimentally to comfort others with the same comfort, wherewith they themselves are comforted of God; and when they are converted they are able to strengthen their brethren, as Christ speaks to Peter. By Conversion in that place, is not meant the first worke of grace wrought in the soule; for that was wrought in Peter before his fall: but the meaning is, Peter when thou art strengthened and recovered from thy fall, when thou hast recovered strength againe, then see that thou be carefull to strengthen others, who perhaps may fall into the same weakness with thy selfe. — If any man be overtaken with a fault, (saith Paul to the Galatians) you that are spiritual restore such a man in the spirit of meeknesse. You that are spiritual, i. e. you that are growne and experienced Christians, see that you doe endeavour to recover such a fallen brother. Paul prays for the Philippians, that their love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge and judgement; that is, that they might have knowledge with judgement and experience, so as they might use their judicious knowledge in love for the edification of others, that were but weak in grace: and in the Epistle to the Romans, the same Apostle layes downe this Character of a strong Christian, — I am perswaded of you my Brethren, that you are full of goodnesse, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another; from whence we may gather the Character mentioned, that the more perfect any Christian is in knowledge, or any other grace, the more able he is to admonish others for their edification.

Growne Christians are such as understand the great and profound mysteries of Religion; they are not onely such as use milke, and understand onely the first and plaine principles, such as the Apostle calls *Babes and unskilfull in the Word of Righteousnesse*: — but they are such as are able to digest strong meat, i. e. the deep mysteries of the Gospel, they

Eph. 3. 16,  
17. 8.

2 Answer.  
2 Cor. 1. 4.  
Luk. 22. 33

Expounded.

Gal. 6. 1.  
Expounded.

Phil. 1. 9.  
Expounded.

Rom. 15.  
14.

3 Answer.

Heb. 5. 13.  
14.

Job 34.3.

Job 12.11

אֵין מִן

אֵין מִן

Ain min

E sine

idem est mo-

men in Plu-

bica, due

eum aures

sunt quasi

bilances

quibus ex-

pendunt, &amp;

que audi-

mus. Mer-

cer.

us &amp; us.

nostitum,

sic minus

verba.

Chrylost.

4 Answ.

Luk. 5. 33.

34. 35, &amp;c.

5 Answ.

Rom. 4.

18, 19, 20.

Expon. de

Compare

Gen. 15. 4.

with Gen.

16, 16, &amp;

with Gen.

21. 5.

they doe in some measure understand, and have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil; that is, to judge between true Doctrines and false. Strong and grown Christians have such an eare, as is able to try words (as it is in Job) even as the mouth tryeth meats. — It is an observation of the learned Mercer, that the same word in Hebrew which signifies an Eare, in the duall number signifies a paire of ballances, — to note thus much, that an experienced and judicious Christian will weigh whatsoever he heareth, before he believeth it. For as the tongue of the ballance standeth as a Judge between the two Scales, so should the heart of every man weigh what he heares, and so will every growne and judicious Christian. He will not take up truth upon trust, but he considereth first, and beleeveth afterwards. — Nor will a grown Christian take up with inferiour Knowledge, but will like a growne Scholler, be searching after the deep things of God.

A growne, experienced and strong Christian, is most conversant and employed in the most strict and severe exercises of Religion which tend most to mortification. Weak Christians are all for easie and ordinary exercises, as hearing and reading good books; but a strong Christian is much in spirituall watchfulness, secret prayer, frequent fasting, self-deniall, and heavenly meditation, and such like duties as have a speciall influence upon the mortification of sin and corruption. A childe whose parts and strength is weak, is not conversant about such arduous and great undertakings as a grown man.

He can believe the accomplishment of Promises and Scripture-prophecies, though Gods Providence seem to make against them, and though there seem no outward probabilities for them. Thus it argued Abraham was strong in faith, who against hope believed in hope, and being not weak in faith, he considered not his owne body now dead. — There were several things might have staggered Abrahams faith, had it not been very strong.

1. There were fifteen yeares at least between the making of the Promise of giving him a Sonne, and the fulfilling of it.

2. Abraham was about an hundred yeares old before he

had a Son; and so unlikely to have children, *Gen. 21. 10.*  
 3. *Sarah's* womb dead, and no ordinary hope of Procreation.

4. And after the promised Son was born, God calls upon Abraham to offer him up, and yet notwithstanding all this, he staggered not at the Promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and was fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

A strong Believer can suffer as well as do for the sake of Christ. Greater strength of grace is required to suffer for the truth, then to profess the truth; and therefore our Saviour propounds this to the ambitious suitors the sonnes of Zebedee; *Are ye able to drinke of the Cup that I shall drinke of? and to be baptized with the Baptisme wherewith I am baptized withall?* implying thus much, that they did not well understand their own strength, that there was more grace required to suffer for the name of Christ, then to believe on the name of Christ; and accordingly as is our strength of grace, so is our courage for the cause of Christ less or more. *Nicodemus* when he had but little grace, he came to *Iesus*, but yet in the night, by stealth; hee durst not openly appear for Christ, but afterwards as he grew in grace and knowledge of Christ, so he grew in courage for Christ. And when the cause of Christ was debated in the Assmby of the chiefe Priests and Pharisees, there *Nicodemus* boldly pleads the cause of Christ—*Doth our Law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth?* Nay we read afterward of a higher resolution of this once fearfull *Nicodemus*, when Christ was crucified and at the lowest.—Wee find that *Nicodemus*, which (saith the text) came at first to *Iesus* by night, brought a hundred pound weight of mixture of Myrrhe and Aloes for the Buriall of Christ. The like instances we have in *Ioseph of Arimathea*, who was a disciple of Christ, but secretly for fear of the Jewes—But afterwards, when he had got more strength of grace, the Scripture tells us, *He went in to Pilate boldly, and craved the body of Iesus.* To profess Christ boldly, in a time when dangers and difficulties attend, that Profession argues a strong faith; a weakly Constitution dare not goe out, unless the weather be fair, but a strong body can indure the hardest weather. A weak

Rom. 1. 20  
51

6. Answ.

Mat. 20. 21  
23.

John 3. 2

John 7. 50

John 19  
39

Vers. 38.

Mar. 15. 43



and young Convert is fitter to live in the prosperity of the Gospel; but an old experienced Christian like an old tried Souldier, will not shrink in the hardest tryals.—*If thou faint in the day of adversity; it is because thy strength is small.*

Pro. 24. 10

7. *Ans.*

He is one that is able to govern his tongue, that though passion be in the heart, yet through the strength of his grace he bridles it in and restrains it, so as it shall not break into open raylings, revilings and clamours as others doe. Saint James gives this character of a strong Christian. *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man*, not legally, but Evangelically; He is a perfect man, i.e. He is grown strong in the grace of God.

1am. 3. 2

8. *Ans.*

Mat. 6. 25.

30.

He is one that dares trust Gods Providence for outward things, however he is in straits; as it argues littleness of faith, to distrust Christ for food and raiment, so it argues strength of faith, that though the vision tarry, and no deliverance appear, yet then to live by faith as the just are said to doe, this argues strength of faith.

Hab. 2. 4.

9. *Ans.*

He is one that labours for unity in the Church, as well as for purity in the Church. He will labour to his power that Christs coat shall be without rent as well as without spot. This Character I gather from that exhortation of the Apostle; *Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.* Nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walke by the same rule; let us mind the same thing. It is a note thou art weak when thou makest a stirre in the Church about thy opinions. Weak children are most forward, when children are weak and sickly nothing will please them: so it is with some weak ones in the Church, their humour is such, you know not how to please them, but a grown experienced Christian is sober and wise, and very earnest to preserve unity in the Church of Christ.

Phil. 3. 16.

Use 1.

Before I proceed to speak any more about strength of grace; I shall make some application, of what I have delivered about the marks and signs of strong grace; and the use I shall make, shall be to give you some cautions about these foregoing Characters, and there is need of a two-fold caution.

1. Take

1. Take heed you do not imagine your selves strong in grace when you are weak. This is a dangerous mistake.

2. Take heed of thinking and judging your selves weak in grace, when you are strong in grace; this is an uncomfortable mistake. *There is a man (saith Solimon) that maketh himselfe rich and bath nothing; and there is a man that maketh himselfe poor, and yet bath great riches.* I would therefore caution you that you may neither live above nor beneath what you have, that you may not proudly fancy you have what you have not, nor discouragably fear you want what you indeed have.

Prov. 13. 7

Use of  
Caution.

1. You are not to measure the strength of grace by the length of your Profession. Many who are long standers in the Profession of Religion, are but *slow walkers* in the wayes and practice of Religion; the souls Proficiency in grace, is not the issue of length of time, but the fruit of free grace. There were those in the Church for so long a time, that they ought to have been teachers of others, but they had attained but little growth or strength of grace. They that came at the eleventh hour had their penny, as well as those that came early into the Vineyard. The scope of which Parable is (as some Interpreters say) to shew that those who come late to the Profession of Religion, may yet out-goe many in gifts and graces, who have been long before them in Profession. How many amongst us, their years speak them eighty, but their knowledge and grace note eighteen.

Heb. 5. 12

Mat. 20. 16  
expounded.

2. Measure not the strength of grace, by the strength of your affections to some of the wayes of God. The love of a newly married Couple may be more fond at first, afterwards it's more solid. Women who are the weaker vessels are usually more affectionate. — Weak Christians are usually most affectionate. — When the Creepie was cured, we read that upon the first cure he leaped for joy; it's likely he did not continue to doe so; the newnesse of the change did much affect him, and so it doth young Converts.

Acts 14.  
10. 12. 13

9. 02. 017

3. Measure not the strength of grace, by the abundance of the means of grace which you enjoy. *Alas, Laodicea had a glorious light shining amidst her. — She was one of the seven Candlesticks. — And because she had such means of grace she*

9. 01. 027

Rev. 3-17

mistook her selfe, saying, *I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.* But said Christ, *Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, & poor, and blind, and naked.*

4. Measure not the strength of grace by the strength of your gifts. There is a new disease amongst children called the Rickets, when children grow big in the head, but weak in their limbs: this disease is spiritually upon the souls of many of our poor Professors; their heads grow in respect of gifts and knowledge, but they doe not grow strong to walke in the wayes of God; they are like the Moon, increasing in light but not in heat. In the dayes of the *Schoolmen* the gifts of men were very high, and yet the power of godlinesse was at a low ebbe in those dayes; there were in those times many sublime notions, Seraphical speculations, curious distinctions, subtile objections, & elaborate answers to them, grave and weighty sentences; but alas, but a little of the power of grace in the hearts of those men, and then they taught.

2 Caution.

2. Caution is to prevent mistakes of those who are apt to judge themselves weak in grace, when indeed they are strong in grace.

Heb. 12. 23

1. Because thou hast not perfection of graces, do not therefore conclude thou hast not strength of grace. Truth of grace is one thing, and strength of grace is another; so strength of grace is one thing, and perfection of grace is another. You must stay for perfection till you come to heaven; it is there only where the spirits of just men are made perfect. It is a witty observation that one hath. In Grammar (saith he) the Present tense is accompanied with the Preter-imperfect tense, but the Future with the Preter-pluperfect tense. Even such is our present state of grace, it's accompanied with imperfections;—but our future shall be more then perfect.

Eccl. 7. 20

Pro. 20. 9

There is no Perfection here; There is not a just man on earth that doth good, and sinneth not? (saith Solomon) Who can say, I have made my heart clean? If I wash my hands with some water (saith Job) and make my selfe never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes shall abhorre me. i.e. Though I have by Regeneration some grace, yet all my defilements shall never in this life be put away. In the Prophecie of *Zachariah* we have the Lord speaking thus.

Zec. 13. 9

*I will refine them as silver, and will try them as gold is tried; and yet in the Prophet Isaiah God saith, I have refined thee, but not with silver; to reconcile both places, The meaning is, that though God begin to refine his people, yet they are not perfectly refined.*

Isa. 48. 10

2. Doe not judge thy selfe weak in grace because thou hast not strong affections. God doth make up in the experience of old and grown Christians, what is wanting of the great affections they had at their first Conversion. Holy Greenham often prayed that he might keep up his young zeal with his old discretion. What is wanting in affections God makes up to thee in solidity of judgement, cleareness of knowledge, abundance of experience and stableness in the faith.

Mr. Greenham.

3. Judge not the strength of thy grace by the strength of thy comforts; the fruit may grow strong, when the blossom is off. I have spoken of this before; and therefore wil only adde this, that heavenly joyes and raptures are very sparingly found amongst Gods people. They are Gods special indulgences to some of his speciall children. I will conclude with a saying of that godly and learned Scotchman. Whilst I live (saith he) I never expect to see perfect Reformation in the Church, or feel perfect ravishing joyes in my heart.

Mr. Rollock

2. TIM.



VIII.  
SERMON  
At Law-  
rencelwy,  
Lond.  
April. 6.  
1651

## 2 TIM. 2. 1.

*Be strong in the grace of God that is in  
Christ Iesus.*

Case 1.



Proceed now to to answer some Cases of Conscience, which may be deduced from the Doctrine I have laid down.

1. *Whether strong temptations may be consistent with strong grace?* This is a needfull and practick Case, because the People of God when tempted by the De-

vil, they doe not only question the strength but the truth of their grace.

Before I resolve this Case, I shall premise these generall positions.

Posit. 1

1. It is certain, where there is truth of grace, there may be strong temptations from the Devil. The Devil is like a thiefe, which robs not out-houses, where there is nothing but dung and straw; but the Cabinets that are in the Closet; so this great thiefe of the world, he is not so eager to rob and spoile the out-houses, wicked and ungodly men; but those who have the riches of grace in the Cabinets of their hearts, these he labours to rob and spoile: or as a Pirate, who sets not upon an empty vessell, but upon a ship laden with rich merchandize; those who are fraught with the rich gifts of grace, the Devil by his temptations, will labour to make prize of for himselfe.



2. Let the temptations of the Devil be never so strong, yet they shall not be above the strength of grace, which Believers have received from God. *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.* He will proportion the burden to the back, and the stroak to the strength of him who is to beare it; if temptations increase, our strength shall also increase, whereby wee may be able to grapple with them.

Posit. 2

1 Cor. 10  
13.

3. It is evident that the temptations of the Devil are alwayes ordinarily most strong, after Gods People have discharged some extraordinary duties to God, or have received most discoveries of grace from God. In both their Cases the Devils temptations are usually great. You find that immediately after the Celebration of the Lords Supper the Devil desired to winnow the disciples; after they had performed that extraordinary service to God, the Devil was desirous presently to set upon them. So you find that after Christ had in an extraordinary manner, *fasted forty dayes and forty nights*, he was immediately after tempted of the Devil; and so also after his Baptisme, *no sooner was he out of the water of Baptisme, but he was in the fire of temptation.* The Israel of God can be no sooner out of Egypt, but this hellish Pharaoh pursues them. And Hezekiah had no sooner kept the solemn Passover, but Senacherib comes up against him. All this is to shew us, that after we have put forth most grace in a duty, then the Devill will labour to play his after-game with us, if he misse of his fore-game; If Satan cannot keepe us from dutie and from enlargement in duty, he will fly-blow our duties by pride and so marre them. And then after wee have received the most especiall manifestations from Gods love and favour in Christ, then may we expect to be assaulted by the Devill: Thus Paul, after hee had *those heavenly raptures, and abundance of Revelations*; the Devill set upon him with vile temptations; he had the Messenger of Satan to buffet him, *a thorn in the flesh*; which is not to be meant of any disease, but of some sharp temptation from the Devill. So you find that immediately after that voice to Christ, *This is my well-beloved Sonne, in whom I am well pleased*, that then the Tempter came

Posit. 3

Luk. 22. 23

Mat. 4. 2. 3

Dr Hall's  
Observations.

1 Cor. 12. 7

Mat. 3. 17

to him. Hence you may gather from that Connexion between those two Petitions in the Lords Prayer, *Forgive us our trespasses, And lead us not into temptation*: to note to us, that no sooner can we get the evidence of our pardon, but wee may expect to be tempted of the Devil.

Posit. 4

4. That men who have the greatest strength of grace, are like to meet with the fiercest assaults and the strongest temptations from the Devill; and this brings me to answer the Case, *That strength of grace may be consistent with strong temptations.* To clear and confirm this, there are these two particulars

- to be inquired into. {
1. When temptation may be said to be strong?
  2. How and why such strong temptations may be consistent with strong grace?

Quest. 1

1. *When temptations may be said to be strong?*

Ans. 1

1. Then may temptations be said to be strong, when the solicitations of the Devill to sinne are urgent with the soule, when they are not weak and faint suggestions, but violent assaults, which will not be removed untill assented to; when the Devill haunts a man so that hee will not let him alone, then may they be said to be strong. Thus it is said, *Satan stood up against Israel*,—i.e. Hee set himselfe to tempt David, and provoked him. i.e. He would not him alone, but haunted him with hellish importunity ——— till hee had nimbred the People.

1 Chron.  
21.1

2. When they are frequent and continued. Small temptations often suggested become strong. Small drops of water by frequent falling make hollow the hard stone, which a few great and forcible blowes will not doe: so temptations, though but to small finnes, if they be continued, may have greater entrance into the heart then a violent assault may.

3. When



Job 1.8.

make him question Providence, tormented him with grievous Diseases to make him clamour against Providence, and above all this tempted him to curse God and to dye, by the instigations of his wife; and yet though Job was thus haunted by the Devil, he was a Believer strong in grace, and the most eminent Saint in that age, and that part of the world at that time, as God himselfe testifies of him, *that there was none like him upon earth, a perfect and an upright man.*—He was not onely for riches the greatest of all the men of the East, but for holinesse the greatest upon the earth, yet thus was he afflicted and assailed by the devil.

Another instance there is of David, an eminent believer, and hath this commendation, *that he was a man after Gods owne heart*, and yet how furiously was he tempted by the Devill? one while Satan moved him to number the people, another time to defile another mans wife, another time to counterfeite himselfe mad before Achish King of Gath, another time to judge all his holy duties to be in vaine, and at another time to question the faithfulness of God in his promise to make him King. *He said in his haste that all men were liars*, even Samuel the Prophet also. Thus Peter an eminent Apostle of Christ, after he had made such a glorious Confession of his faith, and had discovered more grace then in all his life time before, you finde him suddenly after by an instigation from the Devill, beginning to rebuke Christ, and counselling him to spare himselfe.— And thus Paul that had such high and heavenly Raptures, such divine Extasies, yet had he the Messenger of Satan to buffet him. But above all instances you have *Jesus Christ*, who though he had perfect grace, and was full of grace and truth; yet this could not exempt him from the temptations of the Devill. He was full of the Holy Ghost, yet *was he forty dayes tempted of the devil*, and that with strong temptations; if you consider their continuance, their urgency one after another, and their suitability to that his present condition. So that it is plainly manifest, that strong temptations may be consistent with strength of grace, by these instances given.

Mat. 16.  
16, 17.  
compared  
with 16.  
ch. 22, 23.

Reas. 1.

2. It appears also by reasons drawn,—

1. From God, for the clearer illustration of the glory of his

his owne Attributes; and therefore the Scripture is cleare in this. Particularly to shew how the temptations of Gods people make his Attributes to be more illustrious: As first, by his faithfulness. *God who is faithful will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.* And then his wisdom, *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.* He will by his wisdom finde a way for their escape. And then also hereby will his Pity and Compassion be made glorious; therefore Christ *became like unto us, that he might be a merciful High-Priest, able to succour and pity those that are tempted.* And then lastly the glory of his power. In our weaknesse God will manifest his power, *for his strength is made perfect in weaknesse.* Thus it pleases God to exercise his people with great afflictions and temptations for the setting out of his owne glorious Attributes, and magnifying of his owne name.

1 Cor. 10.

13.

2 Pet. 2. 9.

Heb. 2. 17.

2 Cor. 12.

9.

Reas. 2.

2. Another Reason may be drawn from Gods people themselves.

1. God in afflicting his Children aimes at their good. Thus when the Devill tempted *David* to number the people, and when he was sacrificing at the floore of *Ornan* the Jebusite, there did God tell him that the Temple should be built, this was the issue of his temptation. So when *Job* was so tempted and afflicted, in the issue all was for his good. *Jobs* graces had never been so illustrious, had not the Devils temptations been so furious. This is one end of Gods afflicting his people, that their graces may become more orient.

1 Chro. 21.

1.

2 Chro. 3. 1

2. Another may be to check pride. There is no greater temptation in the world to pride then eminency in grace. Pride it is that worst fruit which growes upon the best stock. 'Tis not so much the ornaments of the body, as the endowments of the minde which stirres up pride; and this was *Pauls* case, after his abundance of Revelations, there was a thorne in his flesh, a Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be lifted up. God will suffer those which have strong grace to be strongly tempted, to check the pride of their hearts.

2 Cor. 12.

9.

3. The godly are more able to grapple with strong temptations then weaker Christians are, and so God suits the service



vice and sufferings of his people, to the proportion of the strength of grace.

Reas. 3.

3. Another Reason may be taken from the Devill, from that malice which he beares to all the People of God, and especially to those who have most grace ; whom God loves most the Devill hates most. When the Voice from Heaven said to Christ, *Thou art my well-beloved Sonne*, then came the devill to assault and to tempt him; if you are the objects of Gods dearest love, you will be the objects of the Devils deepest rage : and though he cannot damne thy soule, yet he will trouble thy conscience ; if he cannot break thy head, he will bruise thy heel.

2. It also procéeds from the Devils knowledge as well as malice ; he knowes if he can but get those which are strong in grace to sinne, he shall doe the more mischief, as

2 Sam. 12.  
14.

1. It will open the mouthes of wicked men to blaspheme God and Religion, as in the case of *David* ; *By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme*. How were the mouthes of Gods enemies opened to blaspheme his name ?

Gal. 2. 14.  
1 Cor. 3. 9.

2. It will imbolden the weak to sinne with more freedom, when they shall see those which are eminent to fall : and thus the example of *Peter* made the Gentiles to Judaize. When the strong shall abuse his liberty, he becomes a stumbling-block to those which are weak. When *Phygelus* and *Hermogenes* turned away from the faith, how did all *Asia* turne aside also ? Men of eminent gifts, when they shall apostatize, how doe they draw others in abundance ?

2 Tim. 1.  
15.

1 Chro. 21.  
1.

3. It will provoke God to inflict heavy judgements on the places where you dwell. Thus the Devill knew, that if he could get *David* to number the people, it would procure a judgement upon them ; and therefore it is not said, he stood up against *David*, but against *Israel*, and provoked him to number the people ; he well knew, if he could prevaille with *David*, all *Israel* should suffer for it. Thus we see, that where there is strength of grace, there may be and are strong temptations.

But

But here may an Objection be raised from that of *John*, where it is said, *He that is borne of God sinneth not, and keepeth himselfe that the wicked one toucheth him not, and that they which are strong have overcome the wicked one.* And if this be so, how can that be a truth, that strong temptations from the Devil, may be consistent with strong grace in the heart?

Object.

1 Joh. 5. 18

1 Joh. 2. 18

When it is said, *The wicked One toucheth him not*; it is not to be taken absolutely, as if the devill did not tempt a man at all, therefore there must be a restriction of the clause, *he toucheth him not*; that is, with a deadly touch; and so *Cajetan*, *This phrase excludes not the kindes of temptations, but that we are not hurt, nor eternally destroyed by them.* But I conceive rather that these words have a peculiar reference to the 16. verse, where is mention made of a sinne unto death; the devill shall not prevaile, or touch a man so, as to commit that sinne which is unto death. Though he may tempt, and will be continually assaulting a man, yet he shall never prevaile against him, so as to draw him to the committing of that sin.

Sol. 1.

1. From hence we may learne the indulgence of God to weak Christians; whilst their graces are weak, their temptations shall not be strong. God will not put weak Christians upon such strong trials, as those who have obtained greater measures of grace. Not every man in *David's* Army was put to break through the Army of the *Philistines*, to fetch of the waters of the Well of *Bethlehem*, but *David's* three *Worthies*. God will not put young Converts to break through a Host of temptations, untill they shall have obtained experience and strength of grace to grapple with them.

Use. 1.

2. Hence also learn, that men of the most strongest and most eminent gifts and graces, ought not presume upon their owne strength. Consider thy self lest thou also be tempted. Thou which art most *spiritual*, take heed lest thou be foiled. Some mens pride may make them think they are above *Ordinances*, yet their owne experience may satisfie them that they are not above temptations; and certainly, they which are not above temptations, will still stand in need of *Ordinances*; now no man in the world, either is or shall be above

Use 2.

Gal. 6. 1.

temptation; if any, surely *Adam* would, yet he in paradise, the best of places; and in innocency the best of states, was not exempted from the temptations of the devill, and thereby fell; therefore let no man presume upon his own strength.

Luk. 12. 31

3. Remember this for thy comfort, that though the devill tempt thee with strong temptations, yet he shall never have his will against thee. It is true, a godly man may fall into that particular act unto which the devill tempts him, yet as to the devils general aime (the damning of thy soul) he shall never have his will. It is a notable expression that of our Saviours to *Peter*, sayes he, *Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift you as wheat*: Satan hath desired to have thee, that was the devils generall aime. Though he may his Will as to a particular act, and thou maist yield to his temptation, yet he shall never carry thee with himselfe into hell.

Heb. 2. 18.

4. Remember to your great comfort, you who are the People of God, and harrailed with the devils temptations; thou complaineest that they are great for kind, long for continuance, and the more dangerous, because suited to thy present condition. Remember that thus the devill dealt with *Jesus Christ*, his temptations were suited, continued, and for kinds, gross, being to distrust Providence, to selfe murder, and to blasphemy; and why was all this, but for thy comfort? he suffered being tempted, that he might be able to pittie, compassionate and succour thee, being in the same condition.

2 Tim.



2 TIM. 2. 1.

—My Son, be strong in the Grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.—



E proceed now unto a second Case of Conscience concerning strength of grace, which is this ;

*Whether strength of grace may be consistent with strength of lusts and corruptions in the heart ?*

In the answering whereof I shall speak to these particulars.

1. When my corruptions be said to be strong ?
2. Why those that have strong grace, have many times strong corruptions ?
3. What strong corruptions are they that those that are strong in grace, are most subject unto ?
4. In what cases, and with what limitations may strength of corruptions consist with strength of grace ?

1. *When may corruptions and lusts be said to be strong in the soul ?*

1. When sinnes are committed with complacency. Sin at first is like a Snake that is almost starved by reason of the cold, and is very weak and feeble, but if it be laid in the bosome, then it gathers strength, and after a while sinne revives and becomes a delight in the soule. If thou wert at first troubled at sinne, and afterwards takest pleasure in sinne, it's a signe that sinne hath a great hand over thee. Thus God complaines of his people, *What hath my beloved to doe in my house ? — When thou dost evill then thou rejoycest.* We may know the power and strength of corruption in us, by sins activity in us, and by our chearfulnesse and complacency in

2. By

I X.  
SERMON  
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rence Jewry,  
Lond. the  
same day.  
1651.

Case 2.

Quest. 1.

Ans. 1.

Jer. 11. 15.

*Ans. 2.* 2. By the frequency of sinne, as a relapse into a disease, argues the strength of that peccant humour in the body: so reiterated and multiplyed acts of the same sinne, argue the power and strength of that sin in our hearts. Corruption gathers strength even as grace doth, by the frequent acting and exercise of it.

*Ans. 3.* 3. When sinne is persisted in against the checks of conscience. As it argues the strength of a streame that it bears downe before it whatsoever bank would check the course of it: So it also argues that there is a strong current of corruption in thy soule, that beares down before it all the warnings, checks and reproofs of conscience.

*Quest. 2.* 2. *Why have those that have the strongest graces, many times also the strongest corruptions?*

*Ans. 1.* 1. It ariseth from the naturall temperature and constitution of the body, which doth dispose men to some sin more then another, although they have such eminency of grace; and hence it is, that those who are naturally and constitutionally passionate and given to anger, though they may have a great measure of grace, yet what adoe have they to bridle in their anger? what adoe to be greatly angry and not greatly sinfull? And so such whose temperature inclines to be lustfull, though they have much grace, yet all little enough to suppress lustfull thoughts and wanton looks in them.

*Ans. 2.* 2. God suffers this to humble his people, and to keep them humble under their great measures of grace. It is observable in nature, that those Creatures which have the most excellency in them, have something also of defect and deformity in them, as if the God of nature did it to keep them humble. The Peacock hath glittering feathers, and yet black feet; The Swan hath white feathers, but under that a black skin; The Eagle hath many excellencies, quick fight, and high flight, but yet very ravenous; The Camel and Elephant are great and stately Creatures, but of a deformed shape: So it is in the state of grace. God doth suffer some strong and unsubdued corruptions to remaine in them, who have not onely truth but strength of grace, and this is to keep them humble. Thus *Paul* after his great Revelations, had a messenger of Satan to buffet him, and a thorn in the flesh



flesh to afflict and keep him humble; the thorne in the flesh did let out the impostumated matter of pride out of his heart; and the considerations of their corruptions doth much affect the hearts of the godly, that they become,

1. More condescending and compassionate to the weak.

2. They doe depend lesse upon their owne righteousness.

They see it is in vaine to think of establishing their owne righteousness, and that it is too weak a foundation to lay the weight and stress of their salvation upon: the Covering is too narrow, and the Bed is too short for them to rest quietly upon. 3. They are hereby brought to think better of others then themselves, yea to judge themselves the least of Saints, and the greatest of sinners.

3. This is from Satans malice, who if he can draw out great Corruptions from them who are eminent in grace.

Ans. 3.

1. He thereby aimes to blemish Religion, and to darken the honour of Profession, and in this case usually fights against none, *great nor small but the King of Israel, viz.* such as are eminent for holiness. When David fell into those great sins of murder and adultery, Satan had a main end granted him, to make the way of true Religion stink and be abhorred.

2 Sam. 11.  
14.

2. Hereby Satan hath his end to embolden those that are weak to sin. The sins and great miscarriages of such as are great Professors, are great stumbling-blocks in the way of the weak to make them fall.

1 Cor. 8. 10

3. Hereby the peace and purity of conscience is violated, the devil will play at small game rather then at no game: and if he cannot prevail to damn thy soul, yet he will endeavour to disquiet thy conscience.

3. What are those great corruptions and sins unto which strong believers are incident?

Quest. 3.

1. To lose those strong affections which they had at their first Conversion. Holy Greenham complained, that it was very difficult to keep together his old discretion and young zeale.—Young Christians (as hath been already observed) have strong affections, and but weak judgements. Their heat is more then their light. Their present apprehension and sense is great and high, their experience little and low. And so also strong Christians, who may have much

Ans. 1.

Rev. 2. 3. 4.

Joh. 4. 14.

Job 19. 28

1 King. 1. 1

grace, yet the flood and flash of affections may be much abated, and it is the fault of old Professors, that they do not labour to maintaine the primitive vigour and vivacity of their first affections; they are too apt to *leave their first love*, yet we must know they do not decay so as to be banquerupts in grace. In the godly the decay and declining, though it may be great, yet it is neither totall nor finall; though he may faile, yet he is not a banquerupt, he hath still a stock remaining which can never be quite spent, a fountaine which can never be quite drie. *He bath in him a Well of water springing up to eternall life.* The water of a fountaine may be mudded, but it will clear it selfe againe. It may be dam'n'd up in one place, but it will break out in another; so it is with grace. A tree, you know, in Winter season the fruit and leaves fall off, and it seems as if it were dead, but there is life in the root; so it is in Christians, their beauty and blossoms may fall off, their fruit drie up, their leaves drop off, the beauty, the exercise and the fruits of grace may cease for a time, and yet *the root of the matter is in them.* It often fares with old Professors, as it did with old *David*, of whom it is said, that all the cloathes he did weare, *could not get or keep heat in him*: So they, all the duties they performe, and all the Ordinances they enjoy, cannot keep up that youthfull heat of vigorous affections which once they had. Many of Gods Children have not now as once they had, such complacency in God, such fervency in prayer, such attention in hearing, such delight in Sabbaths, such mournfulnesse and tendernes of spirit, such hatred of sinne. Now they have not such aggravating thoughts of sinne, as in former times, nor the occasions unto sinne, so avoided as formerly. How many are there, who heretofore lookt on every sinne as an hateful evil, but now doe not so: time was when every gnat seemed a Camel, and every mote a beam, and every mole-hill a mountaine, but now they can extenuate and excuse their sinne. Heretofore the most pleasing sinne was abominable, the smallest detestable, and the lightest intolerable; but it is otherwise now through spirituall decayes and abatement in our affections. There are many heretofore when they fell into sinne, were wont to walk sadly, to sigh

sigh deeply, weep bitterly, pray affectionately; but now doe not these things with those warme and working affections as formerly. The time was when many Professors of Religion, prepared themselves for holy duties with more care, attended to them with more diligence, delighted in them with more complacency, and gained more profit and edification by them then now they doe. And that's the first sinne, that those who have grace, both in truth and strength, are apt to fall into, viz. spirituall Decay.

2. Such as are strong Christians are very subject to spirituall pride, and to be highly conceited of their owne gifts, parts and graces. Spirituall pride is a secret spirituall corruption, that is in the most spirituall and gracious heart; it is a bad fruit that grows on the best root: there is nothing better then grace, and there is nothing more abominable then sinne, and there is no sin so bad as pride, and there are none so apt to fall into this sin of pride, as they that have much grace, and there is nothing weakens a strong Christian more then pride, and nothing argues weaknesse more then this boasting.

3. To behave themselves with contempt and superciliousnesse towards weak Christians, is an ordinary fault of the strong. There is not any one thing in Scripture more often mentioned then this, that we should not despise or discourage the weak, which notes an aptnesse in the strong to be faulty herein. *Let us not judge one another any more.* The word *μην* notes, they were wont to doe so before. Spirituall pride is a root of bitternesse, which beares these two bitter fruits. 1. An over-valuing of our selves 2. An undervaluing of other mens persons and gifts.

4. Strong Christians are apt to put too much duty and task upon the weak. — *Jobus* Disciples failed in this towards the Disciples of Christ about fasting. Strong Christians should deale tenderly with the weak, they should excuse their failings, conceal their weaknesse, commend their performances, cherish their forwardnesse, resolve their doubts, beare their burdens, and hereby make the way of Religion to be lovely and amiable to them, whereas by their too much austerity the weak are disheartned at their first entrance.

Ans. 2

Ans. 3.

Rom. 14.  
1, 2, 3.  
Verse 13.  
*Μην  
αλλήλους  
κρινουμεν.*

Mat. 9. 16,  
17.

*Grace with its different Degrees.*

Luke 12.  
19.

5. To be content with measures of grace. How apt are they that have grace to say in one sense, as he said in another, *Soul take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years*; and hereupon many grow slack and carelesse in holy duties, and doe not improve Ordinances for the increase of their graces. The best of Christians are apt to fall into this satie-ty, then which nothing can be more prejudiciall to the soule. The Devill tempts those that have but a little grace to thinke they have none, and those that have more grace to think they have enough. The best are apt to mistake themselves in this, to think that there is a just dimension and full growth of grace attainable in this life. Whereas indeed the best improvement of having much grace, is to desire more, and not to be satisfied with any measure of grace, *till we come to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulnesse of Christ*, and that's not attainable in this life. Perfection is the aime of this life, but it is the reward of another life. Wee should endeavour after Perfection in grace, but we shall not attaine it till grace be perfected in glory.

Eph. 4. 13.

Quest. 4.

4. *In what cases, and with what limitations may strength of corruptions consist with strength of grace?*

The Resolving of this Question is of very much use to the soule: for that soule that is over-mastered with strong Corruptions, may not onely question the strength of his grace, but the being of it. How may I then know, that I have both the truth and strength of grace in me, though I am over-powered sometimes by strong and prevailing Corruptions?

Ans. 1.

Gal. 5. 7.

1. If you maintaine in you a strong opposition against your Corruptions. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, *but doth the Spirit lust against the flesh?* though you cannot fully subdue sin, yet doe you strongly oppose it? if so, there is grace, and strength of grace too, which is able to make and hold up this opposition. An uncontrolled subjection unto sin, argues the strength of sin; but an irreconcilable opposition of sinne argues the strength of grace. Strength of grace is not so much seen in those particular acts of suppression, and actuall over-comming of it, as in that constant and habitual frame of heart in the opposition of sin.

2. Though

2. Though sinne be strong, yet grace may be strong too in thy soul. If thou hast a strong measure of humiliation, though thy sin be great, if thy sorrow be great too, it evidenceth thy grace is so also. It was a great grace in *Mansiebs*, that he *humbled himselfe greatly*, though he had been a very great sinner.

*Ans. 2.*

1 Chro. 23.  
12.

3. If thou hast strong cries to God against thy sinnes, this argues grace, though it be ready to be *described* by thy Corruptions. If when Corruptions and Temptations prevaile, thou prayest to the Lord with *strong cries and teares*, this argues grace, yea and the strength of grace.

*Ans. 3.*

Deut. 22.  
26, 27.

4. If thou hast strong affections that carry thy to Christ, certainly thou hast grace, though thy strong Corruptions often carry thee from Christ. Peter had more Infirmities, and Corruptions, and Sinnes, then all the Disciples besides (excepting *Judas*.) He took Christ aside, gave him carnall counsell, and said as to his sufferings, *Far be it from thee Lord, this shall not be unto thee*; for which Christ said to him, *Get thee behinde me Satan*. He dreams of merit, and boasts of what he had done for Christ, as it is observed of him, when he said to Christ, *Behold we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?* Peter of all the Disciples was the most confident of his owne strength, and boasts what he would doe and suffer for Christ; *Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. And if I should dye with thee, yet will I not deny thee*. Nay, and presently after this confident undertaking, Peter denies Christ, and swears and curses that he knew him not. Some observe, that *Peters* cursing, was not onely his cursing of himselfe if he knew Christ, but that he also cursed Jesus Christ, that so he might appeare to them to be none of his Disciples; and yet notwithstanding all this, Peter had not onely truth and reality, but eminency and strength of grace, for though temptations and corruptions did sometimes prevail, yet he had strong affections towards Jesus Christ; he did and suffered that which few or none of the other Disciples did.

*Ans. 4.*

Mat. 16. 22

Mat. 19. 27

Mat. 26.  
33, 35.

1. He was the man that of all the Disciples wept most bitterly for his sins.

Mat. 26. 75.



Joh. 20. 5,  
6.

John 21. 7.

Acts 1. 15.

Application

Use. 1.

Ro. 6. 12,  
14. expoun-  
ded, and  
compared  
with Rom.  
7. 23.

2. Peter was the first that ran to the Sepulcher, and went in to the Sepulcher to see what was become of Christ.

3. He was the man, who hearing that Christ was risen and on the sea-shore, leapt into the sea for joy.

4. He was the man that made the first Sermon, and first preached the Gospel after the Ascension of Christ.

5. He had that love to Christ which was as strong as death; for he suffered death, and was crucified, (as say Ecclesiasticall Writers,) but would not be crucified but with his heels upwards, deeming it too great an honour to be crucified in the same manner that his Lord and Master was; so that the strength of his affections, did argue, notwithstanding his great failings, the strength of grace in him.

To make Application of what hath been spoken in this Case of Conscience.—

Though in the Cases before mentioned strength of grace may be consistent with strength of corruptions; yet there are other Cases wherein they are altogether inconsistent.

1. When the strength and workings of Corruptions are not clearly discovered to the soul; for grace alwayes as a light set up in the soule, doth discover the darknesse of corruption.

2. Where corruptions are not sensibly bewayled, it is to be feared that there is not strength of grace.

3. Where occasions to those strong prevailing sins and corruptions are not heedfully avoided. Certainly if thou hast grace to make thee sensible of what corruptions thou art incident unto, thy grace will make thee walk so circumspectly, as to avoid all occasions leading thereunto.

4. If they be not strongly resisted, and the beginning of each corruption not diligently suppressed, in this case strength of grace and strength of corruption are utterly inconsistent.

5. Though there may be strong grace and strong corruption in the soule, yet the reigne of any one corruption is utterly inconsistent with grace and the strength of it. *Let not sinne reigne in your mortall bodys. Sinne shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace; which is not to be understood in the Annomists sense, that belie-*

vers are not under the mandatory power of the moral law : But the meaning of the word ( Law ) as *Beza* interprets it, *Is the Law of sinne*, and so the Apostle *Paul*, chap. 7. 23. mentions a law in his members that did warre against the Law of his minde, and did bring him into captivity to the law of sinne, that is, sinne would have swayed in him with the power and force of a law. And this argued grace and the strength of grace in *Paul*, that though he was over-born by the strength of corruption and sinne, and taken prisoner by it, yet he never yielded to it as to a lawful Sovereigne ; for so he adds, Verse 25. *So then with the minde I serve the Law of God, but with my flesh the law of sinne.* It may be said of the corruptions in Gods children, what was shewed to *Daniel* concerning the beasts, *They had their Dominion taken away*; yet their lives were prolonged for a season.

Rom. 7. 25

Dan. 9. 12.

6. When we see there is a consistency between grace and corruption ; I would be understood of spirituall and inward Corruptions, as hardness of heart, spiritual pride, deadness in duties : for into grosse, external, open acts of evil, strong Christians do seldome fall.

7. We must also be further informed, that if we consider particular acts of sinne, some one lust may seeme to be more strong in a godly Christian, then in a meere morall man. As for instance, in the case of lust, when we consider how *David* did abuse his neighbours wife, and how *Abimelech* would not touch another mans wife; one would have judged *David* the heathen, and *Abimelech* the beleever; and therefore the strength of grace or corruption must not be judged by any one particular act, when some impetuous temptation hath prevailed.

8. Lastly, we are to know that a Corruption may be really weakned when sensibly strong. As a man in a Feaver is seemingly strong, but is really weak : so Corruption may be then most enfeebled when in our apprehension it is most enraged ; it may rave and rage most when it is in crucifying. As a Coale glows most just before its going out ; a Candle burn'd downe in the socket gives a blaze a little before it be extinct : so it is when Corruption is ready to expire. As in a meere moral man sinne may be restrained when it is not subdued ; Corruption may be

be quiet where it is not mortified : So in a regenerate person it may be subdued and mortified, where yet it may rage as if unrestrained. A mans last gaspe may be the strongest breath : So when Corruption is ready to give up the ghost it may seem to breath strongest. As a Bird may flutter when his neck is broken ; so sinne may seemingly resist grace, when the power, strength and life of it is utterly broke.

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2 Tim.



## 2 TIM. 2. 1.

*Be strong in the grace of God that is in  
Christ Iesus.*

X.  
SERMON  
At Law-  
rence lury,  
Lond.  
April. 6.  
1651



WE have already handled two great Cases of  
Conscience about strength of grace, about  
the consistency of strong temptations and  
strong corruptions with the strength of  
grace, and shall now proceed to a third  
Case, which is this;

3. Whether strength of grace may con-  
sist with the want of of those strong affections, which Christians  
have had at their first Conversion?

Case 3.

In answering whereof I shall endeavour to shew three  
things.

1. When a man may be said to lose his first affections?
2. In what Cases may a strong Christian want strong affections?
3. Whence is it that those that have strong grace may want such strong affections as they had at their first Conversion?

1. When may a Christian be said to lose his first affections?  
Affections are fitly compared to the pulses of the soul, by  
which may judgement be given of the state and temper of  
the soule; and that we may know when these affections

Quest. 1.

beat low and are decayed, we may make judgement hereof.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>. 1*

1. When we have not such eager desires after duties. It is very remarkable, that at a Christians first Conversion, he is so earnest and eager after holy duties, that he will hardly allow time for the duties of his particular calling; nay how have men at first tyed themselves to hear so many Sermons, make so many Prayers, read so many Chapters, spend so many hours in holy Meditation by themselves, and good conference with other Christians? But alas, afterward this fervour begins to cool and remit, and men pray lesse, and hear more seldome, and this is from the multitude of their worldly occasions. Usually men at their first Conversion, (which as Divines have observed) ordinarily doth fall out between the eighteenth and twenty eighth year of their age (though God indeed be tyed to no year) yet men at that age have usually lesse of the world, and so it comes to passe, that afterwards when the cares and profits, and pleasures of the world steal away their affections, that they grow much more remisse then they were at the beginning.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>. 2.*

2. Affections may be judged to be decayed, when men have not such ravishing joyes as they were wont to have. How many have been at first in Davids frame of heart, *I was glad when they said to me, Come let us goe into the house of the Lord?* But afterwards the over-flowing of this flood of joy by degrees hath abated.

*Psal. 122. 1*

*Ans<sup>w</sup>. 3.*

3. When sensible profit by Ordinances is abated. A man may profit by Ordinances, and yet not be sensible of that his profiting. A Christian may grow at the root in solidity of grace, though it may be not shoot up so much in blossoms of affection.

*Quest. 2*

2. In what Cases may a strong Christian want strong affections?

*Ans<sup>w</sup>. 1*

1. In case you have lesse sin in duties, though lesse affections: A weak young Convert hath often-times much affection in holy duties, but much corruption too. They are very subject to rashnesse and precipitancy in their Prayers, and to be proud of any small measures of grace in duty, and too apt to have carnal dependance upon their duties: But old



old experienc'd Christians, as they have often lesse affection, so lesse sin in duties. Papiſts have very much affection in the performance of their devotions: but alas they have the leaven of this error in their best duties; that they think they merit by them: but grown and knowing Christians, though they may not be so affectionate in duty, as the weak, yet they may exercise much more grace then they do. And so also it is after duties are performed. Weak Christians are apt to indulge their corruptions afterwards, thinking they have made a compensation for their finnes by their duties: But an experienced grown Christian, though not so affectionate in duty, yet he is carefull afterwards that he do not by sin spoile all his duties.

2. A strong Christian may want strong affections, in case he hath strength of judgement to recompense the want of his affections. *Young trees are more sappy, but old trees are more solid*; Wherefore the Apostle prays for the *Philippians*, not only that *their love might abound*; but that *their judgement might also abound*. As a man that is come to his full age, though he doe not grow in bulk and extension of parts; yet he growes intensively, and in the consolidation of the parts of the body; So old and experienced Christians, though they have not so much affection; yet they have more solidity and clearnesse of judgement, more experimentall knowledge in the profound mysteries of the Gospel, and more distinct apprehensions of the deep things of Christ. A strong Believer, what he wants in affections he hath compensated to him in a distinct and experimentall knowledge of the deceitfulnesse of his heart, and of the vanity of the world, of the sinfulness of sinne, and of the transcendent excellency of Christ. New Converts are rash, inconsiderate, injudicious; and therefore we have a promise made to new Converts, that they should proceed in grace. It is a promise made to the Gentiles, when the Kingdom of Christ shall come amongst them, that though at the first they were rash, yet it is said, *The heart of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plain.* Affection without knowledge will be but rashnesse; which (like mettall in a young Horse, will be apt to precipitate him and make him stumble. An

Ans. 2.

Phil. 1. 9.

Iſa. 32. 4.

experienced Christian, though he have not so much seeming metal in his affection, yet shall rid more way to heaven by far then a young Convert, and that without fear of stumbling. At the first kindling of the fire, there may be more smoak, though afterward the flame will be clearer: So when at first thou hast much affection, afterwards thou shalt have a clearer judgement.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>. 2.*

3. A strong Christian may want strong affections, in case it proceed from a naturall temper, and not from a sinfull carelesse distemper. There are some persons that are naturally of a soft and tender disposition, and these are naturally more affectionate; nay the woman, who is the weaker vessel, commonly her heart holds most affection: And so likewise there are some who naturally are more bound up in their affections, and are of a reserved temper, who naturally doe not break out into any great expression either of the passion of joy or grief. We read in the Gospel, that they that expressed most affection to Christ at his death, and made the most passionate lamentation for him, were the *women*, who naturally are of a more melting disposition. Some mens dispositions are like ice, they will easily thaw and melt; others like iron, it must be a hot fire that will melt them down: So it is, some men will be more affectionate upon a small occasion then others upon a greater, and this is from naturall disposition. *Melancthon* was not so affectionate as *Luther*, but it is observed that he was more judicious.

*Luk. 23. 27.*

*Ans<sup>w</sup>. 4.*

4. In case of sicknesse and old age, and bodily weaknesse, He that hath strength of grace may yet want strength of affection. The expression of our affection depends much upon the temperature of the body; if bodily strength and vigour be impaired, our affections must needs flag. As the ebbing and flowing of the Sea depends upon the motion and influence of the Moon: so our affections doe ebbe and flow much what, as the strength or weaknesse of the body hath an influence upon them. As a Musician when he is grown old, cannot so dexterously handle an Instrument, as when he was young, though perhaps he hath now more judgement and experience in Musick: so it is in old age, that brings experience in the wayes of God, yet may abate affections

tions. Old age and sicknesse makes the body like a tyred Horfe to the active soule; an active Traveller, would faine ride away to his journies end, but his Horfe is tyred. An aged sickly Christian may have as much grace and more then he had at first, and yet not be so able to pray; and so a Minister not so able to preach affectionately as before; and and this from the indisposition of the body.

3. *Whence is it that those that have strength of grace, may yet want those strong affections which they had at their first Conversion?*

Quest. 3.

1. Because at first Conversion grace was but particularly employed, which afterwards was more diffused and generally employed. When much water runs in one Channel, it makes the stream the stronger; but when there are many rivulets cut out, though there is as much and more water, yet there is not the same strength of stream: So it is at our first Conversion, all our affections made up but one stream, and so our affections seemed the stronger. A new Convert hath not so many duties to performe as a grown Christian hath, because he doth not know so many duties. It may be at first all his affections run out to pray, and hear the Word, and read good books, and whilst all the affections runne in this one channell they seem to be very strong; whereas a grown Christian he hath not only these generall duties, but many particular duties of his calling and relations to follow, hee hath many duties to perform to God and men, which a new Convert knows not, and therefore it is, that though his affections may seem weaker; yet his grace is as strong as before and stronger.

Ans. 1.

2. This is from the newnesse of the condition. Naturally we are much affected with any new thing; as for example, for a man that hath been many yeers in a dark Dungeon, to be suddenly brought into the light, the suddenesse of the change would much affect a man: This is the state of our soules at our first Conversion; we are thereby brought from darknesse into light, and from the power of Satan unto God. By the grace of Conversion God calls us out of darknesse into his marvellous light; and because it is so so marvellous; therefore it doth so much affect. The change at first Conversion is very great, a man becomes another

Ans. 2.

1 Pet. 2. 9

another man, and a man is so affected, that he is put into a kind of astonishment. Yet in this case we must distinguish between solid affections, and floting, and transient passions, which do wear off presently, and vanish suddenly. The affections of some Christians, especially young ones, are like those colours which are not in grain, they will soon fade. It is with a young Convert as with a man going to execution, while he is upon the ladder a pardon is unexpectedly brought how will this man be transported with joy? he will leap for joy, hee will in that case be all joy and exultation for the present, and it may be afterward the flush and torrent of his joy is abated, though his life be as dear to him as ever: So when the soule hath been brought, by the Law of God to a sight of its lost condition, and then the Gospel hath proclaimed a pardon, and the Spirit of God hath set on the comfort of that pardon upon his heart, Oh what ravishments hath that soule for the present! which perhaps he shall not long retain, the violence of his joy is abated, but the solidity of it remains. The soul is much affected with its first meeting with Christ, and though the flush of that joy be over, yet the soules love to Christ is as much, and its prizing Communion with Christ the same. The Creeple when he was restored to strength, went leaping and praying God, because the unexpectedness of the cure did mightily affect his heart; and this is a second reason, why those who are grown and solid Christians, yet perhaps may not retain the same measure of affections they had at their first Conversion.

Acts 3.8.

Ans. 3

Luke 15  
22

3. A third Reason may be taken from Gods indulgence to young Converts, who usually gives in comfort according to the necessity of his people. It is with God our heavenly Father as with naturall Parents, they are most tender over their new-born children. That Parable of the returning Prodigall is very full to this purpose; his Father did not only receive him mercifully, but bountifully too, he gave him more then was for necessity; not only *shoes*, but a *ring*; not only *cloaths*, but the *best robe*; not only *bread*, but the *fatted Calfe*, and Musick at this Feast, and all this was for this newly converted and repenting Sonne, though his Father did not entertain him so every day: So our God, at our first  
Con

Conversion expresseth much of his bounty and indulgence to his children, though afterward we may have the same love of God, & the same love to God, though the expressions may not be the same now, as formerly in those days of Gods bounty.

Let us from hence learn, that though we have lost those affections which we had, yet we must

U/c.

1. Labour to be sensible of, and humbled for those decays. A decayed condition is an uncomfortable condition, though thou hast so much grace as will bring thee to Heaven, yet by thy decays thou wilt be very uncomfortable here on earth.

2. Labour to get those decays repaired. If thou *hast left thy first love, repent and doe thy first works.*

Rev. 2. 4, 5

3. Make up the want of former affections in solidity of knowledge and judgement; and if the candle give not so great a blaze, let it give a more clear and constant light.

4. Labour to keep up the primitive vigour of your affections.

1. Remember you may lose that in a short time, which you may be a long time in recovering. A man may lose more strength in one weeks sickness, then many moneths will make reparation. A wound may be quickly made, but not so soon cured. Philosophers will tell us, that the way from the habit to the privation is far easier, then from the privation to the habit; it is far easier to make a seeing man blind, then to make a blind man see: so it is far easier to lose our holy affections then it is to recover them.

2. Labour to keep up your holy affections: for the truth of grace is more discerned by our affections then our actions. Acts of grace may be easier dissembled then gracious affections. A Painter may paint the colour, but not the heat of the fire.

3. Labour to keep up affections as they were at first, because it is very hard to retain them: it is hard to keep them wound up to any height. Flush of spirituall joy is like the Sea; the tide doth not so flow, but the ebbe doth fall as low. Bernard said of these strong gusts and great flush of these spirituall joyes and gracious affections, *They come but seldom, and stay but a short time.* As in nature there is a Spring,

*Rara hora,  
brevis me-  
ra.*



Spring, and then the fall of the Leaf, and one day is clear, and another is cloudy : so it is with the best Christian, his affections are not always at the same pitch, at the same height ; but it should be our endeavour to cherish and maintain in our soules our first flourishing affections, in and toward the wayes of God.

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2 Tim.



2 TIM. 2.1.

—My son, Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.



Aving dispatched three Cases of Conscience concerning strength of grace; I now proceed to a fourth, viz.

*Whether a man that hath strength of grace, may want the comfort of his grace?*

Case 4.

Ans.

I shall answer this question affirmatively; A man that hath the strength of grace; yet may want the comfort of it. Strength of grace (as you have heard) doth not exempt a man from temptations from the Devil, nor from desertions from God. It is an undoubted rule, there may be strength of grace where there is not the comfort and evidence of it. A childe of light may walk in darkness for a time; and though he have the Holy Ghost, working grace, and increasing grace in his heart, yet he may want the oil of gladness, though he have received a precious anointing of grace. A childe of God, as to his spiritual condition, may for a time be in the same condition, that Paul and the Mariners were in, *who for many dayes had neither sun nor stars appearing, being under no small tempest. hopes of being saved being taken away: So it fares with Gods dearest children, they may be in the dark, and can see no light; they may have the graces of the spirit, and yet want the comforts of the spirit.*

In the opening of which point I shall thus proceed.

Sermon II.  
At Lawrence  
Jury, London,  
April 13.  
1651.

Ila. 50. 10.

I John 2. 27.

Acts 27. 20.

- 1 I will prove this from Scripture, that a childe of God may be strong in grace, and yet want the comfort of his grace.
- 2 I will lay down some Reasons, why it is thus.
- 3 Some Directions, how those that have grace, and yet do want the comfort of their graces should procure unto themselves the comfort of their graces.
- 4 And then I shall commend some comfortable Considerations to such as have grace, but want the comfort of it.

1 For the first, I shall give you instances both in the Old and New Testament, that those that have been strong in grace have wanted comfort.

Iob 13. 24.

1 *Job*, a man eminent for grace, a perfect and upright man, and one that feared God and eschewed evil: and yet you have *Job* complaining, *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?* nay, God did not only hide his face, but handle him as his enemy; for he thus makes his moan, *He tears me in his wrath, that is to be referred to God, and not unto the Devil, or to Job's unmerciful enemies, or uncharitable friends. He seareth me, that is, God seareth me: who in my apprehension (said Job) hateth me, and gnasheth upon me with his teeth, and as an enemy sharp'neth his eyes upon me.* And that these sad apprehensions were upon *Job*, that God was his enemy, see him further lamenting himself; *He hath destroyed me on every side, side, and I am gone, and my hope hath he removed as a tree, he hath also kindled his wrath against me, and counteth me unto him as one of his enemies. Yea, Destruction from God was a terror to him.*

Iob 16. 9.

Iob 19. 10, 11.

Iob 31. 23.

Psal. 77. 7, 8.

2 *Asaph*, a holy man, yet thus, complains; *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* These are the sad expostulations of a troubled spirit cast down under deep dejections, and in the dark by reason of the suspension of divine favour.

3 *David*, a man after Gods own heart, whose gracious breathings

ings through the whole Book of Psalmes shew, that he was a man of an excellent spirit, and had much grace: Yet David wanted the comfort of his grace, when his soul was cast down, and his spirit was disquieted within him. And so,

Psal. 42. 5.

Psal. 88.

John 14. 4. 5.  
expounded and  
reconciled. Aug.

2 Cor. 1. 4. 5.

4 *Heman*, a man for wisdom so eminent, that the Holy Ghost useth him as an instance of wisdom, *as wise as Heman*, and yet in the 88 Psalm, quite through that Psalm, was a strain of as sad a complaint as you shall meet withall in the whole Book of God. *Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deep: thy wrath hath been kindled against me, and thou hast afflicted me with thy waves.* So little comfort had these holy men, though they were eminent in grace. It is true of many dear children of God, what was said of the Apostles and Disciples of Christ: *Whither I go (saith Christ) ye know, and the way ye know*, To which speech of Christ, *Thomas* answers in the next Verse, *Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?* *Augustine* doth thus reconcile this, *They did know whether Christ went, but they durst not once believe, that they had such knowledge, they did not know their own knowledge*: The expressions of Christ were different from those words of *Thomas*; the Lord Jesus spake as it was, and *Thomas* spake as he thought. The Apostles had grace, and yet wanted the comfort and assurance of it. I will not instance here of the Lord Jesus, who though he was full of grace and truth, yet he wanted comfort when he was in that bitter agony, and cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Indeed in the New Testament there are not so many instances of those that wanted the comfort of their graces, as we finde in the Old Testament. And the reason is this, Profession at the first publishing & promulgation of the Gospel, met with so many and such sharp afflictions, that God did indulge them, and made their inward consolations to abound, as their outward sufferings did abound. These instances may suffice to prove that it is true, believers who are strong in grace, yet may want the comfort of their graces.

2 To give you some grounds of this, the reasons may be drawn, either, 1 From God; Or 2 From our selves; 3 From the Devil.

N 2

1 Rea-

1 Reason is from the Lord, to withhold from them, to whom he hath given grace, the comfort of their graces.

1 To manifest his divine authority and absolute sovereignty over his people. As the naturall light of the day, and darknesse of the night are at Gods dispose: so also is this spirituell light of comfort, and the darknesse of a deserted and dejected spirit. God gives divine and spiritual consolations out of the goodnesse of his will, and withdraws them, to shew the absolutenesse and sovereign libery of his Will.

2 To let his people to know, that comfort is not essentiall to holinesse, neither inseparably and necessarily belonging to grace. Though there cannot be true peace where there is no grace; yet there may be true grace, where there is no peace.

3 God in the dispensation both of grace and comfort shews himselfe a free and gracious Agent, and all our graces which God works in us, are meerly from Gods grace to us. He will give comfort when and to whom he pleaseth, but still as a reward of his own free grace, the comfort of a pardon. The comfortable knowledge of our pardon is as well from Gods free grace as the pardon it self; and therefore God suspends the comfort of grace to make us loke up to him for it. When thou repentest God gives a pardon, but therein he rewards his own work in thee. To give a pardon or sense of a pardon, is an act of meer liberality in God.

4 God doth this to put a difference between heaven and earth. Heaven is a place for comfort, earth for duty: earth is for the getting of grace, heaven for the rewarding of grace. Our Lord Jesus Christ, like the good Master of the Feast, reserves the best for last. The sons of Nobles, when they travel into forreign parts, have no more allowance then what will accomodate their travels, the inheritance is reserved for them, when they come to their fathers house: So believers, who are strangers and pilgrims here, they have so much grace and comfort as befits their passage to Heaven; but they have an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away but is reserved in the heavens. God thinks it not fit to give constant comforts in an inconstant world, nor full comforts in an empty world, nor lasting comforts in a transitory world.

1 Pet. I. 4.



2 Reason may be taken from our selves, and that in many regards. Men that have much grace, may have but a little comfort; and this may spring from a threefold root in us;

- 1 From something that is meerly natural in us;
- 2 From something that is spiritual and good.
- 3 From something that is evill in us.

1 This may arise from the prevalency of a naturall melancholy in the body, whereby the understanding may be darkned, the saney troubled, reason perverted, and the soul sicken. Melancholy is the mother of discomfort, and the nurse of doubting. It was (as some think) depth of melancholy that prevailed upon *Nebuchadnezzar*, that he did not know, whilst under the power of that distemper. whether he was a man or a Beast: And in the like manner may this bodily melancholy so far distemper thy soul, that thou who hast grace, yet mayest not know whether thou art a child of God, or a childe of the devil. It is no more wonder to see a melancholy man doubt and question his spiritual condition, then it is to see a childe cry when he is beaten, or to hear a sick man groan.

You may silence a melancholy man when you are not able to comfort him; and though you may resolve his doubts and scruples by evident and convincing answers and arguments, yet let but such a man retire alone, and brood over his melancholy thoughts, by the prevalency of this perturbing humour, all is forgotten, and he is as unsatisfied as if you had said nothing to him. And you may perceive, that it is the power of melancholy, that is the cause of a mans distemper, when he is very much troubled, and yet can give no distinct account of any particular thing that doth trouble him.

2 This discomfort often ariseth from that which is good in us, viz. from that holy jealousy and tenderneffe of conscience, which makes a childe of God suspect and inquire into his condition: and though he have true grace, and much grace; yet he is afraid lest all be but a delusion: in such cases the soul doth suppose on sin and infirmities, that it cannot see its own evidences. A tender conscience is more apt to be dejected in the sight of sin.

Gal. 5. 17.

*Res delicata est,  
Spiritus Dei ita  
nos tractat si-  
cut tractatur.*

sin, then to be comforted in the sense of grace; and the reason of this is, because sin doth more directly fall under the cognizance of our conscience, especially a natural conscience: *The works of the flesh are manifest*, but the fruits of grace and of the spirit are not so easily discerned.

3 This discomfort usually springs from a root of bitterness even in the best of Gods children, and is that whereby God doth punish the sins of his people.

1 *Their quenching the motions of the spirit.* If you grieve the spirit of God, it is just with God to grieve your spirits: you never send Gods spirit sad to heaven, but God may make sad your spirits on earth.

2 Sleightinesse and fearlesnesse of heart towards God. When children grow saucy, peremptory and malipert before their Parents, 'tis no wonder if a fathers frown correct that irreverence. Most of those who lie uncomfortably under sense of displeasure of God, may thank themselves for it, they have provoked God by their bearing themselves too much upon his love, and growing secure and fearlesse to offend God. God loves to have his children come neer him in an holy confidence that he is their Father, but yet to keep their distance by humble reverence.

3 Another sin that God punishes in his children, by withholding comfort from them that are strong in grace, is their superciliousnesse, contempt and uncompassionatenesse towards others that are but weak in grace. Gods own people are very much to blame herein, in rigour and unmercifulnesse towards those that are weak in the faith, despising all that are inferiour to them in gifts and graces, whereby they often *break the bruised reed, and quench the smoking flax*, and want bowels of pity and tendernesse towards their brethren. To take down pride, God often brings such, even his own people, to be low in comfort; and it is but just that they should want comfort, who have neglected to comfort and cherish those that were weak in grace.

4 A growing cold and lazy, and heedlesse in holy duties. If we put off God without true service, God may justly put us off without true comfort. This rule holds in spiritual affaires, *He that will not work, shall not eat.* If we abate in the sanctifying work of the

the Spirit, it is but just that God withhold the comforting work of the Spirit. *The sluggard, saith Solomon, hath poverty enough;* so if we grow lazy and sluggish in holy duties; it is just that our stock of comfort do decay. Though holy duties do not merit comforts, yet comfort usually riseth and falls according to our diligence in duties. True grace is never so apparent to, and sensible in the soul, as when it is in action; and therefore want of exercise must needs cause want of comfort. As fire in the flint is never seen or felt, til it be struck out by the Steel: so is grace and the comfort of grace, never so sensible as when it is exercised much in holy duties.

5 Any one sin indulged by, or concealed in the conscience, is enough to marre all your comfort. Concealed guilt contracts horror. The Candle will never burne clear whilest there is a thief in it. Sin in the conscience is like *Jonah* in the ship, which causeth a tempest, that the conscience is like a troubled sea whose waters cannot rest: or it is like a mote in the eye, which causeth a perpetual trouble while it is there; or like the winde gathered in the caverns of the earth, makes earthquakes and terrible eruptions. It is just with God, that *a mans own iniquities should correct him, and his backsliding should reprove him.* Concealed guilt, though it may not bring a child of God to hell, yet for a time it may bring hell into his conscience. So that by all these particulars we may see, that if our comforts be abated, we may thank our selves for it.

Jerem. 2. 19.

Prov. 14. 24.

3 Reason is taken from the restless rage and malice of Satan, who when he cannot do the greater, will do the lesse; and if he cannot damn thy soul, he will labour all he can to disquiet thy conscience. The devil aimes principally to make us walk sinfully, and if not so, then uncomfortably: if he cannot make us live without God and Christ, and grace in the world, then he indeavours to make us live beside the comfort of our grace. And hence it is, that many dear children of God, who have truth and strength of grace in them, yet hearkening too much to Satan, live beside the comfort of their grace.

3 But

Quest. 3.

3 But what shall I do, that want the comfort of my grace to procure it, that so I may have comfort answerable to grace?

Answ. 1.

1 Live more in the exercise of grace; and that is the ready way, not only to increase grace, but to obtain the comfort of grace. It was the Apostolical salutation, *Grace and peace be multiplied.* If grace be multiplied (and that it will by the exercise of it) then peace will also be multiplied. *The work of righteousness shall be peace: and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. Great peace have they which love thy law; and nothing shall offend them.*

Isa. 32. 17.

Psal. 119. 165.

Answ. 2.

2 Leave no sin unrepented of; take heed of guilt of sin lying on the conscience; take away the thief out of the candle, and it will burn clear. *If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far from thee, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles; for thou shalt then lift up thy face without spot, yea thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear. Behold now (saith Job) I have ordered my cause, I know that I shall be justified; the more ordered our ways are, the more steady and full are our comforts: the more sin in the soul, the lesse comfort in that soul.*

Job 11. 14, 15.

Job 13. 31.

Answ. 3.

3 Call to minde former experiences that thy soul hath had of God. Thus did David when by reason of the discomfort of his soul, he cried out, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? O my God, my soul is cast down within me, therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, that is, I will remember thee, and what thou didst at Jordan, when thou didst dry up the river, and thy people passed on dry land into Canaan. And I will remember the land of the Hermonites, that is, what thou didst unto Og King of Basan, and to Sihon King of the Amorites, for Hermon was part of the Country of those Kings.* So the Psalmist was under great discomfort, when he cried, *Will the Lord cast off for ever? Is his mercy clean gone from me? &c.* but he recovers himself out of that sad case by remembring former experience; for he adds, *vers. 12. I will remember the works of the Lord, surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.* Past experiences should be present encouragements.

Psal. 42. 5, 6.

Josh. 12. 1.

Psal. 77. 6.

Psal. 77. 6, 7, 8,  
9, 10, 12.

Answ. 4.

4 Attribute to God the glory of his own grace, and this is the

the way to enjoy the comfort of our grace. Say with the Church; *Not unto us, not unto us, o Lord, but unto thy Name give the glory.* It will be just with God to deny you the comfort of grace, if you deny him the glory of his grace: Want of comfort is Gods physick, to cure our souls of spiritual pride: And humble thankfulness for the least grace, is the way to enjoy the comfort of all our graces.

Psal. 115. 1.

35 Spend more time in cherishing thy comforts, then in questioning of them. It is the fault of some Christians, to spend more time in fruitlesse complaints of the want of comfort, then in faithful indeavours after comfort in Gods way. There are some who are more inquisitive how they lost their comforts, then careful how to recover them: and so indeed they weaken their own hands, but do strengthen the hands of Satan.

Answ. 5.

A fourth general propounded in the solution of this Case, was this: What may be the comfortable considerations which may be gathered from the truth delivered, viz. That strong Christians may be but weak in comfort?

Now the handling of this last, will be an application of the other three particulars, by way of consolation to those that may perhaps now have strong grace, but weak comfort.

36 The godly are never without the ground of comfort, though they may be without the sense of comfort. Though they may be without present feeling, yet they do not want real cause of consolation. They have an undoubted right to comfort, though not a clear sight of comforts. A childe may have right to an inheritance, though he be not able to demonstrate and prove him right. Perhaps a man cannot read his evidences for his land, and yet those evidences give him a right to his lands: so it is with a childe of God, he hath comfort sown, though perhaps he cannot presently reap it: *Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright of heart.* As it was with Hagar in the wilderness of Beer-sheba, her water was spent in the Bottle, and she cast her childe away from her, because she could not endure to see him die; she lift up her voice and wept, that she and her childe should both miserably perish by thirst, and yet there was a Well of water hard by her, but she saw it not: so it is with many a poor soul, who are athirst

Consolat.

Gen. 2. 15. 17.

O

for



for comfort, and (as they think,) ready to perish, and yet there is a Well of water of life and comfort fast by, but they want the eye of faith, to see it. And this is a great comfort that a childe of God, though he may want comfort, yet he hath right unto comfort, in that he hath truth of grace in him.

2 At that time when God withholdeth comfort from thee, yet he doth ~~not~~ really love thee. Jesus Christ doth sometimes serve his children, as *Joseph* served his brethren. He spake roughly to them, and he put them in prison, and yet *Joseph* did dearly love his brethren, and his bowels did yearn towards them: Thus Jesus Christ, his real love is the same to his children at all times, though the manifestation of it may not be alwayes alike. *Joseph* knew his brethren, though his brethren did not know him. *The Lord knows who are his*, though those that are his perhaps do not know that they are so. Jesus knew *Mary*, though she did not know him.

3 There may be much mercy to us in withdrawing of comfort. There may be as much goodnesse of God manifested in the withdrawing of comfort as in the giving of comfort. God many times in wrath, lets a man be filled with the ungrounded comfort of supposed grace. Oh (beloved) it is far better to want comfort then grace. Many a man that hath no true grace, yet hath seeming comfort; but a childe of God is often without comfort, that he may examine and exercise his grace, and so at last enjoy a well grounded joy and a well bottom'd consolation. Grace is the best foundation of spiritual consolation.

John 10.15.

1 Tim.



2 TIM. 2.1.

*Be strong in the grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.*

Sermon 12.  
At Lawreace  
Jury, London,  
April 20, 1651.

**H**ave already handled four Cases of Conscience, concerning strength of grace, viz.

- 1 *Whether strong temptations may be consistent with strength of grace?*
- 2 *Whether strong corruptions may consist with the strength of grace?*
- 3 *Whether a man may be strong in grace, and yet want those strong affections which he had at his first Conversion?*
- 4 *Whether a man may have strength of grace, and yet want the comfort of his grace?*

I shall now proceed to a fifth Case of Conscience, viz.  
*Whether a man may be said to have strength of grace, who hath but weak gifts?*

5 Case.

In the opening of which Case, I shall thus proceed.

- 1 I will premise some Positions.
- 2 I shall positively resolve the Case.
- 3 And then give you some practical inferences by way of Application.

I'll begin with the first, namely the Positions, and they are these four thing:

1 *Posit.*

2 Cor. 12.

The first Position is this, that though all believers they have the same Spirit, yet God in his Wisdom thinks it fit, they shall not have the same gifts. *There are* (saith the Apostle) *diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit*; As it is with flowers, there is not the same smell but different smells to different flowers, and yet all their scents have the same influences from above; and as it is with instruments of Musique, there are divers sounds in the Organ, but the same breath doth cause the several sounds: so in the Church of God, though there is the same influence of the Spirit of God, yet not the same measure of gifts in each member of the Church.

2 *Posit.*1 Tim. 4. 13.  
Verse 15.

The second Position is this, that diversity of gifts is not to be ascribed to mans industry, diligence or education, but to the free pleasure and dispensation of God. It is true, much may be ascribed to study, and industry, and diligence in a way of gifts, which was the ground of the Apostles exhortation, *Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, &c. and meditate on these things: give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.* The Apostle speaks there of profiting in ministerial gifts: which gifts, diligence and study do much advantage and promote; yet though we were all equal in study and diligence, there would be a diversity in our gifts; lest men should vaunt of their industry in acquiring gifts, and thereby exclude Gods bounty in bestowing them. *Psal.*

*Psal.* 127. 1.

*127. 1. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it* (saith *Hilderfam*) Suppose that two men were to read the same Books, and to study the same matter every day, yet the one may be a Dunce, and a man of low gifts, and the other may have rare parts and excellent endowments, this is to shew whom we are beholding to, that is, God, whose dispensations of gifts are many, & variously bestowed. Hence it is the Apostle telleth us, *That all these gifts worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will;* so that though one man differ from another in gifts, yet it is God that maketh him to differ.

1 Cor. 12. 11.

3 *Posit.*

Acts 14. 11.

The third Position is this, that a man may be excellent in one gift, and yet defective in other gifts, one man shall not have all; this is very observable by instances you have in Scripture. The first instance is between *Paul* and *Barnabas*; if you look unto *Paul*, his gift was the gift of utterance and freedom of speech, in so much that at *Lystra Paul* was taken for *Mercury* the god of eloquence, because

because he was the chief speaker; and though it is said of *Paul* that *he was rude of speech*, that is, not as if it were so indeed, but in the opinion and conceit of the *Corinthians*, who being seduced by false teachers, heark'ned to their disparagements of *Paul*. *Paul* he was a most eloquent man, and had much of the gift of utterance; but now *Barnabas* did excell *Paul* in another gift, to comfort those who were troubled in conscience; he was a *Son of Consolation*, to comfort troubled consciences. So likewise in the case of *Peter* & the other Apostles; Divines gather from Christs Commission to *Peter*, singling him out, when he saith, *Peter, feed my Lambs*; *Peter, I will feed thee*. The Reason that some Expositors give, why *Peter* was singled out was this; because *Peter* had an excellent gift in preaching, and in feeding the Lambs of Christ, that is, weak Believers. Moreover, it is said of *James* and *John*, that they were called *Sonnes of thunder*, as having a more Powerfull gift from God, to terrifie and awake a sinners conscience; then *Peter* and other Apostles had. So that though some of the Apostles had most excellent gifts, yet some of them excelled others in some one gift.

The fourth Position is, that there are Cases, wherein men may have great gifts, but weak grace. God is pleased sometimes to carry mens gifts very high, when their graces have not a proportionable elevation; and the reason is, because gifts are for the good of others, for the edification of the Church of God, and not for the good of a mans self only; *They were wanting in no gift; and had all knowledge*: and yet when he mentions their graces, he saith, *I could not speak to you as spiritual, but carnal*: They out-strip other Churches in gifts, yet they came short of other Churches in grace; such was the Church of *Laodicea*, she was rich in gifts, and poor in grace. Now there are four Cases wherein men may have strong gifts, and yet but little grace.

1 When mens notions are cleer and strong, but mens experiences and affections but low and weak; to have more expressions then impressions; to be like the Moon, that though from the wain it grows big, and increases to the full; yet it increases only in light, and not in heat: so men when they meely increase in light of notions and speculations, and not in heat of affection towards

God,

2 Cor. 11. 6.

Acts 4. 36.

Acts 11. 24.

John 21. 15.

Mark 3. 17.

Boanercs.

4 P'st.

1 Cor. 5. 7.

compared with

1 Cor. 3. 1.

Revel. 3. 11.

1 Case.

God and the practical part of Christianity : and it is to be feared that much of the Religion of these times is of this stamp; it is more in notion than motion, more in talking than walking, more in parts than grace.

## 2 Case.

2 When thy gifts are not influential upon thy life. Look as it is in that disease of the Rickets, that children are liable to, they may grow big in the head, and yet decay in the lower parts : So there are some (as it hath been shewn) who have the disease of the spiritual Rickets, they do grow big in the head, big in gifts, and yet decay in their vitals, decay in grace and the exercise of it.

## 3 Case.

3 When their gifts do but tend to the promotion of division in the Church, and pride in their own hearts. This was discovered in the Church of *Corinth*, they came behinde in no gift; but see what he saith in *verse 11.* *For it hath been declared unto me of you (my Brethren) by them which are of the House of Cloe, that there are contentions among you. And then in vers. 12. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, I of Apollo, I of Cephas, and I of Christ;* they were carnal as to grace, and walked as men, though they were high in gifts: and when gifts ingender strife in the Church, and pride in a mans own heart, and when they do elevate and puffe up the heart with vain and high conceits; this is an argument they are but meer gifts. The *Corinthians* were in every thing enriched by God, in all utterance, and in all knowledge, so that they came behinde in no gift; they had abundance of knowledge, but *knowledge puffeth up, charity edifieth.*

1 Cor. 1. 7.

Verse 11.

Verse 12.

1 Cor. 15. 7.

1 Cor. 8. 1.

## 4 Case.

4 When gifts are increased meerly by virtue of continual study and industry; when gifts proceed meerly from strength of natural parts, advantaged by education, study and diligence; if gifts do meerly proceed from that fountain, there may be much gifts, but little grace. The greatest scholars are not alwayes the best men; the reason is, because their gifts are gotten by industry and diligence: their gifts may be high, when their graces are low.

## 5 Posit.

The fifth Position: there are Cases wherein men may decay and be weak in gifts, and yet may be said to have strength of grace.

1 If it proceed meerly from a natural, not a sinful defect. If weak gifts proceed from sinful defects, it argues grace is but weak; as if it proceeds from negligence, from sloth, from carelesnesse



lesse to attend upon Ordinances, from idlenesse, in not reading, in not meditating, not praying, not using holy conference, then grace decays with gifts, these are sinful defects: but now if gifts proceed meerly from natural deserts, as a man of a shallow capacity, of a slow speech, of a bad memory, of a weakly body, that either through sicknesse or old age the body is weak'ned, in that there are natural decays in the body, because the putting forth of gifts depends upon the temperature and disposition of the body. As it is with an instrument of Musick that is out of tune, it makes no melody though the instrument be good: So a body out of tune, hath not that use of, or putting out of gifts. As it is with an old Preacher, his gifts may decay when he is an old man, that he may not have such freedom of speech, such clearnesse of judgement, such strength of memory; as the body decays, the gift of Elocution will decay, and his memory may decay, that he may not be so ready in delivering the Word, but yet he may have as great ability in preaching, yea more experience, more solid judgement, and more clear understanding in the mysteries of the Gospel, then a young man can have: So it is with Christians, their gifts may decay, as the temper of the body decays; as it is with a Musician, when he is a young man his joynts being more pliable, plays more nimbly and melodiously upon an instrument of Musick, but when he comes to be an old man he cannot play so nimbly and melodiously, his joynts being stiffe, but yet he hath more skill then a young man hath. When this doth not proceed from sinful defects, but from natural defects, then may a mans grace be strong, though his gifts and parts be weak.

2 If you want those external advantages to further and promote the growth of gifts, as for example: A Christian that follows an ordinary trade, which carries a Water-tankard on his shoulder, he may attain more brokennesse of heart, more humility and self-denial, more experience of the goodnesse of God toward his soul, and of the method of God, then he who perhaps is in some great, honourable and eminent employment. But that Christian who hath this mean and small employment, and such poor education, shall not attain those gifts, that others have attained

2 Case.

tained, who have greater advantages. As it is with a Scholar that hath been divers years at the University, he hath those external advantages, as education and literature, that his gifts and parts may be much increased; when perhaps a poor man that follows the Plough may attain to more grace, and more acquaintance with the ways of God. Now if such a man have not so many gifts as others, it is not his sin: God doth not require more then he gives.

3 Case.

3 If you have not a calling to use or put forth the exercise of your gifts. Your gifts may decay though grace do not decay. Gifts are increased by exercise, the lesse they are exercised, the more they decay; if thou hast not an opportunity to exercise thy gifts as in former times, to pray in company, to use holy conference, as in former times thou hadst; in such a case a Christian who is strong in grace, may grow weaker in gifts.

4 Case.

4 If what you want in gifts, you make up in humility. Strength of grace is not to be measured by notions and speculations in the head, but by humility in the heart; therefore if thy gifts be weak, if thy humility be great thou hast strength of grace: the less blossoms there are on the branches, the more sap there is in the root. He that hath great parts and is proud of them, it is much to be feared hath less grace, then that man who hath but few gifts and low parts; but in the sense of his own weakness, hath low and self-denying thoughts of himself.

5 Case.

5 Lastly, if what you want in gifts, you make up in your practice, by a holy and conscionable walking. That Martyr that said, *I cannot dispute, but I can burn for the truth*, had more grace then those that could dispute and not burn.

The Application of this Case is only for caution; and I shall give you a threefold caution.

Use 1.

1 Caution. Take heed ye be not proud of the greatest measure of gifts you have; there is nothing in the world that a man is so apt to be proud of as his gifts; a man is not so apt to be proud of grace, because he hath a principle to check his pride; but he is apt to be proud of his gifts; a man is not so apt to be proud of outward endowments, as clothing, riches, and the like, as he is apt to be proud of his gifts. Expositors that do handle the Prophecie

of

of *Ezekiel*, they say that *Ezekiel* is called ninty three times (*Thou Son of man*) in that Prophecie; now there is no other Prophet that is mentioned in all the Bible, but only one which is called *The Son of man*, and that is *Daniel*. Now Expositors give this reason why he is called by this title, because he was a Prophet of the greatest gifts, and had the most glorious visions of all the other Prophets: compare this Prophecy with *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Daniel*, *Hosea*, or all the rest, yet *Ezekiel's* Prophecie is a more dark, mysterious, profound book, Now *Ezekiel* being a Prophet of the greatest gifts, God takes this care to keep his heart low, *Thou Son of man*; *Thou Son of man*, and all is to keep his heart low; which doth teach us thus much, that those that have great gifts, they ought to spend a great deal of time to keep their hearts humble and low, because there is a flatuous humour in our nature, whereby we are apt to swell and be puffed up in the sense of our own gift.

Dan. 8. 17.

2 Caution. Prize a little grace before a great measure of gifts; ye will prize a pearl though no bigger then a pea, more then a great heap of stones. There is great reason why we should prize a little grace before much gifts.

1 Grace will last when gifts are withering. Blazing Comets will fall when the Star never falls; a falling Star is no Star, but only a Comet: So the hypocrites may have a great blaze of their gifts, and yet may fall like Comets that hover in the aire. Grace is like a Star that keeps fixed in its orbe; there is a great deal of difference betwixt a painted face and a natural complexion; the painted face will not always last, but natural complexion that will always remain. Gifts are but paint, the ornament of the creature, but true grace which is as the natural complexion that will remain.

1 Reas.

2 Prize a little grace before much gifts, because gifts will leave thee short of Heaven. Christ told the learned Scribe that he was not far from the Kingdom of Heaven; but alas, for all his gifts and learning, he fell short of heaven. *Many will say to me (said Christ) in that day, Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy Name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy Name done many wondrous works?* You see it is observable, these men might pretend to high and great gifts, and yet they to whom God opened the secrets of his King-

2 Reas.

Matth. 7. 23.

dome, against them he shut the gates of heaven. A man may be a Preacher, and have the secrets of heaven opened to him, and yet have the gates of heaven shut against him. A man may attain the gift in Christs Name to cast out devils, a great and a miraculous gift, and yet those men that cast out devils were them selves cast to devils. *We have done many wondrous works*; they that did wonders were made a wonder: they that had so much gifts came short of heaven, yea, they *who may preach to others, may them selves be cast away*.

3 Caut.

3 Do not mistake strength of gifts to be strength of grace. Parents would not judge their children strong when their heads and breasts are big and their feet but feeble; so you may grow big in your heads, in notions and speculations, in gifts, and yet feeble in practice of grace. Now that you may not mistake your selves, and may not be deceived; I'll shew you how you may know the difference betwixt those that have strong gifts, and those that have strong grace. In the general take this: As art resembles nature, so gifts resemble grace. Now there are four differences.

1 Difference.

1 As grace strengthens, corruption weakens. It is with grace and lusts, as it was with the house of *Saul*, and the house of *David*. As *Dauids house grew stronger and stronger*, so *Sauls house grew weaker and weaker*. As the Ark was set up, *Dagon* was thrown down; the *Dagon* of corruption will be thrown down before the Ark of grace, and the Ark of the Covenant; But gifts may strengthen, and yet corruption never the weaker: Indeed gifts discover corruption, but are not able to mortifie and subdue it. Gifts discover many corruptions, but mortifie none. Gifts take a cognizance of many a sin, but never put a period to any. Men that have gifts are resembled to the Moon, and men that have grace are resembled to the Sun: the Moon hath an influence upon the water, to make that move, to ebb and flow: the Moon sheds light upon all creatures, but no heat, to make those creatures grow and spring: So a man of gifts may have light, but no heat, in those gifts, to make grace to grow, and make sin to fade and wither. Gracious men are like the Sun, that doth not only give light but heat, by the influence thereof things spring

and grow out of the earth: the great parts of a gifted man, often occasionally strengthen his corruptions, but do not weaken them. *Augustine* could say, *Ignorant and illiterate men, they take heaven when others with all their Scholarship go to hell.*

2 Where there is strength of grace, there the heart is more humbled under the measures of grace received; the stronger the graces are, the more the heart is humbled. But strength of parts in most men makes them proud and lofty. Empty vessels make the greatest noise, and so do shallow streams. So men that have great gifts are often empty of grace, *1 Cor. 8. 1.* They are puffed up with pride, who have more gifts than grace, and by the humility of the soul you may know whether that soul be stronger in grace than in gifts.

3 He looks more after the supply of the grace he wants, then in a way of contentment in the grace he hath. This argued *Paul* had much grace, when he thus speaks, *I do strive after more and more grace, if by any means I might attain the resurrection of the dead*, that is, I do labour after perfection of grace, which those shall have that are raised from the dead, and exalted in Heaven: but now a man that hath gifts, is more apt to look what he hath then what he wanteth. Men of gifts are more apt to look upon their attainments than their imperfections; they look upon their gifts in a multiplying Glasse, more then they are; and upon their failings in an extenuating glasse, less than they are.

4 The more grace any one hath, the more communicative he is, that others may be partakers of the same grace. When the Apostle speaks of the duties of Husbands and Wives, he would have them further one another in the way to Heaven, *considering they are heirs together of the grace of God.* Christ also speaks to *Peter*, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* By Conversion is not meant Gods first act in bringing *Peters* soul home to Christ, but it is meant an establishing work of grace, as if Christ should have said, *Peter*, now thy grace is weak and it will be weaker by thy fall, but when thou art recovered from thy fall, and denial of thy Master, then strengthen thy brethren, labour to strengthen the graces of other men, when thy graces are

*Surgunt indoliti, & rapiunt calum, & nos cum doctrina nostra perimus.*  
August.

2 Difference.

3 Difference.

*Phil. 3. 13.* expounded.

*Munera non vulnera ostendit.*

4 Difference.

*1 Pet. 3. 7.*

*Luk. 22. 32, 33.*



strong, and thy strength recovered, and this is a very good evidence that thou hast not only grace, but strength of grace thy self, when thou art careful to strengthen others: but such as have gifts only, with little or no grace, they are loath to communicate their gifts unto others; they would willingly monopolize their gifts, and grudge to impart them to others; they would not have other men have the like gifts with themselves, lest their glory should be darkened. They are not of *John Baptists* minde, who cared not though he decreased, so as Christ increased; but rather they are like to one *Aspendius* a skilful Musician, who would never play on his instrument before any of his Profession, lest they should learn his skill.

This is a notable discovery, whether thou hast strong grace or strong gifts only, which thou mayest know by thy willingness and readinesse to communicate unto others what God hath imparted unto thee.

1 TIM.



2 TIM. 2.1.

*Be strong in the grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.*



*You have heard the first doctrine opened, viz. That Believers are not to be satisfied in weak measures of grace already received, but ought to endeavour to attain greater strength of grace. I shall now proceed to the improvement of this point, by making some Application of it; and I shall*

*direct, the use to two sorts of Christians.*

1 To such as are weak in the faith.

2 To such as are strong and grown Christians.

1 With weak believers I would leave these directions and consolations following.

1 It is your wisdom to look more after the truth of your grace, then after the measure of it. It is an error in many Christians, especially young Converts, that they bring their graces rather to the ballance then to the touch-stone, they weigh them when they should try them. *Peter* being asked by *Christ*. *Simon, lovest thou me more then these?* he answers not about the measure of his love, but about the truth of his love, *Lord, I love thee, and thou knowest I love thee.* It is not the quantity or measure, but the nature & essence of grace, which is mainly considerable. If thou hast grace in truth & reality, it will inraise, be sure thy

Sermon 13.  
At Lawence  
Jury, London,  
April 20, 1651.

Use 13

John 14.13.

thy grace be right, and as the light shineth more and more to the perfect day: and as the nature of leaven is, that it doth spread through the whole lump, so is grace, it is of a spreading and increasing nature; and therefore be careful thy grace for nature and for essence be true; and for the measure of it, it will then increase.

2 In finding out the truth of grace, we must not measure it so much by actions as affections and holy dispositions of the heart: the bent, frame, and tendencies of the heart, are the best discoverers of grace in the heart. When a Christian casts up all the stock of grace he hath, he will find that it doth consist more in desires than in indeavours, & more in indeavours and attempts to perform holy duties, than in the performance it selfe. Natural life is more discernable by the heat then by the colour. A Painter may counterfeit the one, but not the other. When the Lord Jesus is describing the beauty of his Spouse, he doth not say, How faire are thy looks? but, *How faire is thy love?*

3 Be not discouraged, though men of glorious gifts fall away: for the poorest Christian that hath but the smallest measure of grace shall never fall away. The gifts of a Formalist may quickly wither, for they have their root in nature: but the graces of a true Christian shall never perish, because they have their root in Christ. *A Christians life is hid with Christ*, hid in him as in a root; as in the fountain of life. A painted face may soon fade, so doth not a true and natural complexion; the varnish of a formal hypocrite is soon wash't out, but when true grace like a colour in grain, hath grown habitual in the soul, it is not removable: sooner will the sun discard its own beames, then Christ will desert and destroy the least measure of true grace, which is a beam from that *Sun of Righteousness*.

4 Improve your little grace well; this is the way to have more. *To him that hath shall be given*; i. e. more shall be given. God never gave any man a talent to hide it in a napkin. The least measure of grace is accountable for. Grace is improved,

1 When we ascribe all the glory of grace unto God; as he said right, *Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds*. Thy pound, and not my pains. We should do all to the praise of the glory of Gods

Cantic. 4. 10.

Coloss. 3. 3.

Luke 19. 17.

Luke 19. 16.

Gods grace. If we give God the glory of his grace, he will give us the comfort of our grace, and the increafe of it.

- 2 When for the edification and building up of others in their most holy faith. To do good to others is the best way to get more good our selves. The more the Well is drawn, the more water comes, and the better the vvater is; so the more thy grace is exereised, the more grace thou wilt have, and the sweeter will the comfort be of thy grace.

5 To weak Christians. Do not deny the truth of grace in your souls, because you cannot finde the strength of grace in your soules. A poor weak man in a Consumption cannot lift up such a weight, nor can he bear such a burden as a man in strength and heaith can do, yet he hath life as well as the strongest man in the world. It may be *day* when it is not *noon*; thou mayest in respect of spiritual estate, have the strength of a *childe*, though not the strength of a *man*. It is not only an act of *unthankfulness* to God, but also of *uncharitableness* to a mans own soul, to conclude a nullity of grace from the weakness of it.

6 Look not so much on your sins, but look upon your grace also, though weak grace. Weak Christians look more on their sins then on their graces; yet God lookes on their graces, and over-lookes their sins and infirmities: saith the Holy Ghost, *Ye have heard of the patience of Job*. He might also have said, *Ye have heard of the impatency of Job*; but God reckons of his people, not by what is bad in them, but by what is good in them. Mention is made of *Rahabs* entertainment of the spies, but no mention is made that she told a lie when she did so: that which was well done was mentioned to her praise; and what was amisse is buried in silence, or at least is not recorded against her and charged upon her. He that drew the picture of *Alexander* with his scarre on his face, drew him with his finger on his scarre. God layes the finger of mercy upon the scarres of our sins. Oh it is good serving such a Master, who is ready to reward the good we do, and is readie to forgive and pass by what is amiss; and therefore that thou hast but a little grace, yet remember God will have his eye on that little grace, *He will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed*.

James 5. 13.

Match. 12. 10.

Gen. 25. 23.

1 Kings 22. 47.

7. Learn this for thy comfort, that though thou hast but a little grace, yet that little grace shall not be extinguished by thy strong corruption, but at last it shall over-master your corruptions. What was said of *Esaú* and *Jacob*, *the one shall be stronger then the other*, and *the elder shall serve the younger*, and so it came afterwards to passe in the time of *Jehosaphat*, when there was no King in *Edom*; That may be fitly applied to the affaires of the soul, the elder shall serve the younger; corruption in the soul is elder then grace in the soul, and corruption is so opposite to grace, that it labours for the extinction of grace, but this sparke shall live in the midst of the sea of corruption, till at last that great deep shall be made dry; and the house of *David* shall at last quite put down the house of *Saul*, the Name of the Lord will perform this. And therefore thou that art but a weak Christian, learn to stay thy self on the Name of the Lord, till judgement be brought forth into victory.

Use 2.

2. Use of this doctrine is unto strong believers, such as have attained unto a higher forme of grace in the school of Christ.

I. Though you are strong in grace, yet remember it is not the grace of God in you, but the free grace of God towards you, by which you are justified. It is not our inherent righteousness, but the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ that is our justification. Oh consider you that have most grace, what would become of you were it not for free grace? Free grace is the surest and only refuge for a soul to flie unto. God can finde matter of condemnation against you, not only for your worst sins, but your best duties. The best Christian hath no reason to venture his soul on the best thought that ever he conceived, nor on the most holy duty that ever he performed, nor on the highest grace that ever he exercised. A famous instance hereof we have in *Nebemiah*, who had much grace, and did much for God, his people, his house, his cause, yet prays after all this, *Spare me according to the greatnesse of thy mercy*: intimating that God might finde therein matter enough to ruine him, if God did not spare him for his mercies sake. So *Paul* in the discharge of his Ministry, proceeded with so much uprightness, that he speaks thus of himself, *I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified*. He knew, that all the grace, and excellency, and uprightness in him would not make him righteous in the sight of God.

Nehem. 13. 22.

1 Cor. 4. 4.



God. We read of *Ishaphat*, that when he had mustered up all his strength, which was very great; for he had *eleven hundred thousand men in his Militia*, yet he goes to God, and prays, *Lord, we have no might or power against these multitudes, and we know not what to do, only our eyes are up to thee*. So when a Christian hath mustered up all the strength of his grace, and considers the great power of his corruptions which do set themselves against him, he had best go to God and say, *Lord, I have no power against these many and great corruptions, but my eyes are to thy grace that thou mayest help me*. As in a pair of Compasses, one foot is fixed in the Centre, whilest the other turns about the Circumference: so must the soul fix and stay it self on Christ, whilest it is exercised about holy duties. Though Christ (as I formerly mentioned,) commended many parts of the Spouse yet not her hands, to teach us, that all the Spouse could do, could not make her amiable in the eyes of Christ; not the Spouses working for Christ, but Christs work in the Spouse made her beautiful. Oh it is very hard through strength of grace to abound in the work of the Lord, and yet keep the heart humble:

2 Chron. 17. 18.

1 Chron. 20. 12.

Cant. 1. 1. to 8.

And therefore,

II. Consider, they that have most grace, yet have great cause to be humbled, and that in many respects.

1. Thou hast not so much grace and perfection as once thou hadst. Once man was beautified and bespangled with many glorious perfections before the fall; it might have been said of man, that he *was perfect, as his heavenly Father was perfect*; for God made man upright, that is, perfect, nothing was wanting then to make man both an happy and holy creature; but alas, the image of God, in us is now obliterated and defaced.

2. He that hath most grace hath not so much as he shall have in heaven, *Not that I am perfect already, but I forget those things that are behinde, and I press forward unto those things that are before, yea, I press* (saith the Apostle) *toward the mark for the price of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus*. We read under the law of several things that were to be a cubit and half high and broad, it being an imperfect measure, it was to note, that no man in this life hath an exactnesse and perfection, the uttermost that is attainable

Phil. 3. 12, 14.

Exod. 25. 10.

The Exhortation of  
the Familistical  
Perfectionists  
pernicious:  
Heb. 12. 23.  
1 John 3. 2.

tainable by us in this life, is but imperfect. In this life there is a *plus ultra*, something still to be attained in religion, but in heaven men shall be perfect. We shall in heaven be like to Jesus Christ, whom though we now see but darkly and in a glasse, then we shall see him as he is.

Marth. 20. 16.

3 They that have much grace, yet should be humbled; for there are those that have more grace than you, and yet have had lesse time and fewer advantages then you have: there are those that have gone before you much for strength of grace, and yet have come behinde you for meanes of grace: there are those who were the last, and are first, and before you.

Luke 13. 6, 7.

4 Be humbled under much grace; for ye have not so much grace as you should have had, considering the meanes of grace you have lived under. How many yeares have you been in the school of Christ, and yet what little proportionable progresse have you made in the knowledge of Jesus Christ? we may all blush to think what dunces we have been in the school of Christ. The trees of the garden should bear more fruit then the trees of the Forrest: the Figtree therefore which was unfruitful, was the more intolerable, because it was in the garden, in the vineyard. What the Apostle complains against the Hebrews, we our selves may justly take up the complaint against our selves, that *For the time we ought to have been teachers, and yet have need that one teach us again what are the first Principles of the Oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

Heb. 5. 12.

Revel. 2. 5.

5 They that have much grace, and are strong in grace, yet have cause to be humble, because it's likely they had more grace, and did more good heretofore then now; and who is there almost that is not decayed, that hath not in some degree or other *lost their first love*? have you not had (I speak to grown and experienced Christians) more love and zeale to God, more hatred of sin, more grief for sin, more feare of offending God then now you have? are there not many that have and do expresse lesse desire after duty, lesse fervency, lesse frequency, lesse delight in holy duties then formerly? Alas! how many through pride and spiritual improvidence, through neglect of Ordinances, and worldly mindednesse, have much abated in their spiritual estate?

6 Be

6 Be humbled, that though you be strong in grace, yet you have many corruptions in you, more strong then many graces. More are our vain thoughts then our meditations, and more are the things we are ignorant of then the things we know. Corruption is strong enough to keep grace low, but in the best grace is not strong enough to bring corruption under. *When we wou'd do good, evil is present and powerful with us*, to hinder us from doing of good: but when we are doing of evil, good is not present to hinder us from that evil: we are more in sinning then in obeying. Our corruptions are like *Goliath*, our grace as *David*. We exercise more kinds of sins then graces: as in a field there are more briars and thorns then useful trees, and in a garden more unprofitable weeds then Roses and Lilies; so in the souls of the best there are whole swarms of vain, earthly and sinful thoughts, when there are but very few holy and heavenly thoughts.

7 Another argument why strong Christians should be humble is this, that though they may have grace, yet they are subject to fall into that sin, which is most contrary to that grace wherein they are most eminent. *Abraham* was most eminent for faith; he is said to be strong in faith, he is called the father of the faithful. *They which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham*: and yet for all this *Abraham* fell into distrust of Gods providence and power, when he spake untruly and denied his wife. So *Job* was renowned for his patience, *You have heard of the patience of Job*, (saith Saint *James*,) and yet we read in the story of *Jobs* trials, that his impatience did break out in many rash speeches and wishes. So *Moses* was eminently meek, it was said of him, *The man Moses was very meek*, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth. And yet it is said of him, *That his spirit was provoked*, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips: and you shall finde meek *Moses* thus expostulating with God himself, *I am not able to bear all this People alone, because it is too heavy for me; and if thou deal thus with me, kill me I pray thee out of hand; and if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me not see my wretchedness*.

8 This further consideration may also humble us, that in the highest and greatest exercise of grace there is much mixture of sin. We may observe, that even those good actions, for which

*Quantum est, quod nescimus.*

Rom. 7. 21.

Rom. 4. 20.

Gal. 3. 9.

Gen. 20. 2.

James 5. 11.

Iob 6. 9.

Numb. 12. 3.

Psal. 106. 33.

Num. 11. 14, 15

Exod. 1. 17. 19.

Col. 1. 11.

Rom. 15. 13, 14

1 Thes. 4. 9, 10.

Job 17. 9.

Sicut Deus sua  
dona in hac ci-  
ta in aequaliter  
communicat, sic  
coronat. Eua-  
ngel. Matthe.  
13. 14. Luke  
12. 17.

many of the People of God are recorded in Scripture, are yet blemish'd with some notable defect. *Rahab's* faith in entertaining the Spies, was blemish'd with this failing, in telling a lie concerning them. It was also good the Midwives did, when they refused to obey that bloody Decree of the King of Egypt, and would not kill the male-children of the Hebrews, and yet they miscarried (as some observe) in their answer to the King, when they made their excuse. We are apt to mingle sin with the best action we do, and so apt to plough with an Ox and an Ass; and our corruptions are apt to discover themselves, even while we are upon the exercise of our graces.

III. Let the strong labour to be more strong, that so they may be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. And therefore it is that the Apostle prays for the Romans, that they may be filled by the God of hope, with all joy and peace in believing, that they might abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; and yet in the next verse he told them, I my self am perswaded of you (my Brethren) that ye are full of goodness, and that ye are filled with all knowledge. And as he prays for the Romans, upon the same terms he preisseth the Thessalonians, of whom he thus speaks, Now as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you, for ye your selves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed you do it towards all the Brethren which are in all Macedonia, but we beseech you, Brethren, that ye increase more and more. The righteous (saith Job) shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands, shall be stronger and stronger.

To quicken you hereunto, consider,

I The more grace we have on earth, the more glory we shall have in heaven. As God doth unequally dispense his gifts in this life, so accordingly he crowns There are degrees of torments in hell; the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, who devoured widows houses, and for a pretence made long Prayers, are doomed by Christ himself, to receive great damnation; and that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. Now if there are different degrees of torment in hell, then surely there are different degrees of glory in heaven, and those according to different degrees of grace here on earth.

2 It

of this book

2 It is of the nature of grace to grow and increase; and therefore if thou hast grace, either in truth of it, or in the strength of it, it will certainly grow. Grace in Scripture is compared to a grain of Mustard-seed, the least of seeds, which afterwards sprouts and springs so, as that it becomes the largest of plants. In the same Chapter grace is compared unto leaven, which being put into the lump of *Meat*, leaveneth the whole. So grace (as I touched before) in the heart is of a spreading nature, and will diffuse itself into all the parts, powers and faculties of soul and body. Christians are therefore compared to the branches of a Vine, which of all trees grows most, and brings forth most fruit. A Picture doth not grow, but a living child will grow.

3 Such as are strong Christians should yet grow more and more, because in this world there is no stint and measure set for spiritual growth; the *maximum quod fit* of a Christian, is this, he must grow in grace till his head reach up to heaven, till grace be perfected in glory.

4 Shall Worldlings set no bounds to their desires after wealth and land, and yet wilt thou take up with poor measures of grace for Religion? The ordinary answer of ignorant people is, What? must we be wiser then our fore-fathers? and yet those people would be richer then their fore-fathers were; and those that have great wealth left them by their forefathers, yet are not satisfied with it unlesse they increase their estate: let this shame that slothfulness and supine negligence of many, who content themselves with measures of grace.

5 And lastly, consider, that those who were eminent for grace, in what esteem were they in the Church of God, and with what honourable mention are they recorded in the Word of God; such are remembered to be of note in the Church of God. See what an *Enlogium* the Holy Ghost gives *Job*, That there was none like him in the earth. God loves those that are singularly and excellently good; an ordinary pitch doth not so please him. What do you more then others? *Solomon* was so renowned for wisdom, that it is said, That amongst many Nations there was no King like him, that is, for wisdom. So *Hezekiah* was eminent for trusting in God,

Mar. 13. 31, 32,  
33i

John 15. 1.

*Si dixisti sufficit, peristi.*

Rom. 16. 7.  
*etiam*  
Job 1. 8.

Marth. 5. 46.  
*ut respondet*  
*propter*  
Nehem. 13. 26.  
Kings 18. 4. 9.

in



2 Kings 23. 25.

who feared not to break in pieces the brazen Serpent, but trusted in God: none like him of all the Kings of Judah. And so eminent was the zeal of good Josiah after a thorough reformation, that he is also crowned with this commendation. And like him was there no King before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might. By all which instances it is clear, of what honourable esteem have the eminent particular graces of Gods servants been in the sight of the Lord.

2 Tim.



2 TIM. 2.1.

*Be strong in the grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.*

Sermon 14.  
At Lawrence  
Jury, London,  
April 20, 1651.



Living in the last fore-going Sermons, treated of grace in its strength and growth: I am come to speak to this additional clause in the Text, viz. *That is in Christ Jesus*; which passage is here inserted by the Apostle, that he might let *Timothy* know to whom he was beholding for all the grace he had received, even unto Jesus Christ. In the tenth Verse he speaks of salvation, *that is in Christ Jesus*, and here of grace that is in Christ Jesus, to note:

1 That Jesus Christ is the fountain and foundation, both of grace and glory. Jesus Christ gives *grace*, and Jesus Christ gives also *salvation with eternal glory*. Verse 10.

2 That those who receive grace from Christ Jesus, shall also receive salvation by him: for there is an inseparable union between grace and glory.

*The grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.* Grace may be said to be in Christ,

1 As a subject recipient, and so Christ is said to be *full of grace and truth*; he had the Spirit without measure: it pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell.

2 In Christ Jesus, as a fountain-redundant, overflowing and ever flowing to his people: *for of his fulness we receive grace for grace.*

John 1.14.  
John 3.34.  
Col. 1.16.  
John 16.

Again.

Again, when it is said that grace is in Christ Jesus, we must consider Christ.

1 As God co-essential with the Father, and he is the Author and giver of grace, and of every good and perfect gift.

4 Consider him as Mediator (God-man), and to be the purchaser and procurer of grace, and of all the blessings of the New Covenant; for the blessing of Abraham cometh upon the Gentiles, in *no* *Christ*, through Christ Jesus; there are three things implied: to that by this phrase, in Christ Jesus

Gal. 3. 14.

1 That Jesus Christ is the Author and Giver of grace; he only is the *Author and Finisher of faith*, and every grace in his people.

Heb. 12. 2.

2 That Christ is the purchaser of grace; so that all the grace that is bestowed upon us by God, it is through Christ, and for his sake; Grace is from Christ as a fountain, and by Christ as a Conduit.

3 That Christ is the preserver of grace; all the grace that is in us, is in Christ Jesus, he keeps all our graces for us: As the beams of the Sun, because they are preserved by their union with the Sun. *Our life is hid with Christ in God*, hid as the life of a tree is hid in the root, and the being of a stream is hid in the fountain. And herein is the comfort of believers, that their condition is more stable and immutable and safe, then ever *Adam* was in innocency; for he had all perfections of a creature; but they were in his own keeping; but now all the grace that is in a believer is in Christ Jesus, by whom and in whom grace is safely preserved, so as it shall never perish.

Col. 3. 3.

The point of doctrine I observe from these words is this,

Doct.

That all those measures of grace, whereof believers are partakers, they receive them in and from Jesus Christ.

In the handling of which point I will thus proceed.

1 Shew you the truth of it.

2 Give you the reasons and grounds of it.

Now to prove that all grace is received in and through Christ,

1 I will shew the truth of this by many resemblances, to which Christ is compared in the Scripture.

By many types of Christ in the Old Testament.

3. By many expresse testimonies in the New Testament concerning this truth.

1 There are many resemblances in Scripture which do illustrate this, that all grace is from Christ Jesus.

1 He is compared to a root. *He is called the root of Jesse*; not only because he came of the stock of David, but that he gives grace to Jew and Gentile that do believe, for *to him shall the Gentiles seek*, as it follows in the next words. Now that the Prophet there speaks of Christ, is plaine by the Apostles expresse application of that prophetic unto Christ calling him the root of Jesse, *in whom the Gentiles should trust*. And Christ speaks of himself, *I am the Vine; As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me*: the life, sap, nourishment, growth and fruitfulness of a branch is altogether from the root, with which the branches have union and communion.

2 Christ is called the Head of his people; *He is the Head of the body the Church*. Now as sense and motion is derived from the head to the members of the body; so also is grace derived from Jesus Christ to every true believer, every living member of his body.

3 Christ is called the *Sun of Righteousnesse*, because as heat and light are communicated by the Sun to things here below, so there is a sweet influence of grace from Christ upon believers. As by vertue of the Sunnes influence the vegetable and sensible creatures live, move and grow; so also the life and growth of grace in the soul is from that divine influence which Jesus Christ doth shed upon believers.

4 Christ is compared to a fountain, *even a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleannesse*. So that as water doth stream forth in the river from the fountain, so grace flows down from Jesus Christ upon believers, who is a fountain, where all fulnesse of grace for ever dwels, and from whence all grace is drawn and derived; and this is the first proof.

II This truth may be demonstrated by the many types of Christ in the Old Testament, which did shadow out unto us this, that all grace is from Jesus Christ, I shall mention some.

Isa. 11. 10.

Rom. 1. 16.

John 1. 5. 14.

Col. 1. 18.

Mal. 4. 2.

Nisi de super.

Zech 13. 1.

Levit. 9. 32.

Ephes. 1. 3.

Acts 3. 26.

Luke 24. 50.

Gen. 37. 3.

Math. 3. 17.

Col. 1. 11.

Gen. 37. 20, 21.

John 1. 12.

Gen. 37. 28.

Math. 2. 20.

Gen. 39. 20.

Phil. 2. 9.

Gen. 41. 55, 56,  
57.

Psal. 84. 11.

Heb. 4. 8, 9.

1 *Aaron the High Priest was to lay his hands on the people, and to bless them. And herein he was a type of Christ our great and heavenly High Priest, through whom we are blessed with all grace. God having blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Jesus Christ is sent by God to bless his people, and to turn every one of them from their iniquities. And therefore it is recorded by St. Luke, that a little before the Ascension of our blessed Saviour, he laid his hands upon his disciples, and blessed them: and so he doth still bless all true believers, with the spiritual blessing of grace.*

2 *Another type of Christ was Joseph, who in many things was a type of Christ. Joseph was the best beloved of his fathers children; so was Jesus Christ, the son of his fathers love. Joseph was hated of his brethren, and sold for twenty pieces of silver; so was Jesus Christ, he came unto his own, and his own received him not, he was rejected by them, and sold for thirty pieces of silver. Joseph was carried into Egypt; and so persecution drove Christ into Egypt presently after he was borne. Joseph was falsely accused and condemned; so was Christ. Josephs troubles ended in his advancement; so all the troubles of Christ, wrought for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: God having therefore highly exalted him, and given him a Name above every name, for now Christ is sate down at the right hand of the Father. But especially in this Joseph did type out Jesus Christ, that in that dreadful lasting famine in Egypt, Joseph had the custody of all the corne in the land, and he had the issuing out of all the Provision for bread, in all the land of Egypt: So the Lord Jesus is the Lord-Keeper of all that store of grace, with which believers are furnished, which grace is given to help them in time of need. Jesus Christ hath the Key of David, he hath the Key of the treasury of Grace.*

3 *Another type of Jesus Christ was Joshua, who gave unto Israel entrance and possession of the good land of Canaan, and all the promised blessings of it: So Jesus Christ gives unto his people better things then milk and honey of Canaan. He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Our Jesus gives his people a better rest then ever Joshua brought Israel unto.*

4 *Another type of Christ was the the Candlestick of the tabernacle,*



nacle, the seven lamps whereof did give light unto the whole tabernacle. Now these *seven lamps*, what did they type out but the graces of the Spirit of Christ; for so it is said, that there were *seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God*. The Holy Ghost and the graces of it, being so described by *seven spirits* in this regard, because of the variety and protection of that grace which is in the Lord Jesus, and by his Spirit communicated to all his members.

III The third proof of this doctrine may be drawn from the consideration of those clear testimonies of this truth in the New Testament. St. John speaks thus of Christ, that of his fulnesse we have all received, and grace for grace. In Christ there is not only plenty, but bounty; not only an abundance of all grace, but a redundancy of grace. Christians have the fulnesse of a vessel, but Christ hath the fulnesse of a fountain. Take a drop of water out of a vessel, and it is not so full as before, but draw as much water as you please out of the Well of the water of life, and there is no want of water. From Christ we receive *grace for grace*, that is, say some, the grace of the New Testament, added to that grace which was revealed under the Old Testament. Or *grace for grace*, that is, say others, a Perfection of grace according to the Perfection that is in Christ. As in a natural generation, the childe doth receive from his Father limme for limme, and part for part: so in this spiritual regeneration, Jesus Christ (*the everlasting Father*) doth give grace for grace. Or you may understand this expression *grace for grace*, that Jesus Christ is not only the Author of grace, but gives *grace for grace*, that is, one grace after another, *grace upon grace*; the being of grace, and the increase of grace, are both from Christ. This also appears that Christ is the Author and bestower of all grace, by that ordinary prayer wherewith the Apostle doth usually close up his Epistles: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.* The like Prayer we have to the *Romanes*, to the *Galatians*, *Brothers*, *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit*. So also in the close of the Epistles to the *Philippians*, *Thessalonians*, and to *Timothy*, *Grace be with thee. Amen.* All this is to note that Jesus Christ is the fountain from whence, and the Conduit by whom all grace is conveyed unto believers. As in the vision that the Prophet

Exod. 25. 37.

Revel. 4. 5.

Zech. 4. 2.

John 1. 16. expounded.  
Plenitudo receptiva & diffusiva.  
Plenitudo vastis  
Plenitudo fontis.

Perfectio partium, non graduum.

1sa. 6. 9.

Gratiam novam gratiam cumulativam.

2 Cor. 13. 14.

Rom. 16. 24.

Gal. 6. 18.

Phil. 4. 23.

1 Thes. 5. 28.

1 Tim. 6. 21.

Zech. 4. 12.

*Zechary saw. There were two Olive-branches, which through the two golden Pipes, did empty the golden oil out of themselves: So Jesus Christ, that true Olive-tree, doth drop and distil grace upon his Church, whereby they receive from his fulness grace for grace.*

*Object.*

*But in giving this honor unto Christ, do you not derogate from God the Father, when you say, that all grace is from Christ?*

*Ans. 1.*

1. It is no derogation to God the Father, to ascribe this unto Christ, because it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.

*Ans. 2.*

2. And beside, Christ and the Father are one. In saying all grace is from Christ, we also say all is from the Father too: and in saying it is from the Father, we say it is from Christ too. And therefore it is an ordinary prayer prefixed in the beginning of most of the Epistles, *Grace be unto you, from God the Father, & from our Lord Jesus Christ.* So that in the subscription and in the inscription of each Epistle, grace is ascribed to God the Son, but so as not excluding God the Father, and to God the Father, not excluding the Son.

*Col. 1. 19.*

*John 10. 30.*

*Rom. 1. 7.*

*1 Cor. 1. 3.*

*2 Cor. 1. 2.*

*Gal. 1. 3.*

*Ephes. 1. 2.*

*Phil. 1. 2.*

*Col. 1. 2.*

*1 Thes. 1. 1. &c.*

*Ans. 3.*

*John 6. 38.*

3. And then again, Jesus Christ is commissioned and designed by the Father, to give out grace to his people: for so Christ speaks of himself, *I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.* Now it is the will of God, that from Christ believers should receive both justifying and sanctifying grace. *Our sanctification is Gods will,* and Christ came to fulfil that will of God: for so speaks the Apostle, *Sacrifice, & offering, & burnt-offerings & offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein: then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will (ô God); by which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* So that the Will of God the Father, and the will of Jesus Christ are the same in the bestowing of grace. Jesus Christ received commission from God the Father, to bestow grace upon his people; and will you see how that commission runs? you shall finde it in the Prophet *Isaiah: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me, to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to binde up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.* Christ had a commission under his Fathers hand and seal, for him hath the Father sealed. Joseph received authority from Pharaoh, and it was no dishonour to Pharaoh that Joseph was commissioned

*1 Thes. 4. 3.*

*Heb. 10. 9, 10.*

*Isa. 61. 1.*

*John 6. 27.*

to issue out all the stores of corn to the Egyptians in the time of that famine: no more is it any dishonour to the Father, that Jesus Christ doth bestow and convey grace upon believers.

*But doth not this put the Spirit out of office, who is called the holy Spirit, and the Spirit of grace, because he doth work grace and holiness in the hearts of the people of God?*

*Object. 2.*

*Solution.*

*Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa.*  
Iohn 5. 19.

Iude v. 1.

1 Cor. 1. 30.  
Ephes. 5. 25, 26

Ephes. 5. 9.  
Gal. 5. 22.

1 Pet. 1. 3.

Isa. 9. 6.  
Isa. 8. 18.

Heb. 2. 13.

Iohn 3. 5.

What Christ is said to work, that the holy Spirit also doth; because by the Spirit of God Christ worketh. It is a good rule, that the works of the blessed Trinity *ad extra*, are undivided: all those works which are external, and relative to the creatures, as to create, preserve, redeem, sanctifie, &c. are in respect of the things wrought equally common to all the Persons of the blessed Trinity. So that we may say, *Whatsoever things the Father doth, those things doth the Son likewise*, and those things also doth the Holy Ghost; the work of Sanctification is equally ascribed unto all the Persons. *God the Father sanctifies his people.* God the Son doth sanctifie his members, for he is their sanctification. *He loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it with the washing of water through the Word.* And yet the work of Sanctification is most frequently ascribed to the Holy Ghost; *Goodness, Righteousness and Truth*, and indeed all grace being called the *fruit of the Spirit*; and the Spirit is called the *Spirit of grace and supplication*, and the *Spirit of holiness and sanctification*. So our Regeneration is ascribed unto God the Father: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope.* And so also we are the children of Christ by Regeneration, for in this respect Christ is called the *Father of Eternity*. *Behold* (saith the Prophet in the Name of Christ) *I and the children which thou hast given me*; and that there the Prophet speaks of Christ, is clear from the Application of it to him in the Epistle to the Hebrews: *Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.* Neither is the Holy Ghost excluded from this working of grace & regeneration in us; for Christ tells Nicodemus, that *except a man be born again, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* So it is said that God the Father blessed Abraham, & yet the blessing of Abraham came upon the Gentiles through

Gal. 3. 14.

through Christ, that they might receive the promise of the Spirit. By all which instances it doth appear, that though there are diversities of gifts, yet the same Spirit; and though there are differences of administrations, yet the same Lord Jesus Christ, the Authour of all grace through the holy Spirit.

2 The reason and ground of this, why Jesus Christ is the Authour, Purchaser and conveyer of grace to his people, is,

1 Because God the Father hath appointed Jesus Christ, as Mediatour, to transact the great work of sanctifying and saving his Elect.

2 Because by this shall the reproach be rolled away from Christ, who in his life-time was reputed the greatest of all Malefactors, and accordingly suffered death. They were wont to say, *Can any good come out of Nazareth?* God hath therefore given him a Name above all names, that he should not only be anointed with oil above his fellows, by his receiving the Spirit without measure; but that the oil that was poured upon the head of our High Priest should run down upon the skirts of his garments; and that grace which was abundant in him, should also be redundant to his Church, and run down and diffuse it self to all his members.

3 To manifest that Jesus Christ was the second Adam, and came into the world, to repair the breaches which the sin of the first Adam had made. For by the fall we did not only contract upon our selves the guilt of Adams sin, to take off which we have need of the righteousness of Christ imputed; but we have drawn upon our selves the filthinesse and pollution of sin, to take away the power, whereof only the grace, holinesse and inherent righteousness of Christ imputed to us doth avail; and as the first Adam was the Authour and Conveyer both of the guilt, filthiness and punishments of sin to his posterity; so Jesus Christ, the second Adam conveys the life of grace into all his. As the first Adam was the Authour to communicate natural life, as he was made a living soul; so the second Adam did communicate the spiritual life of grace, as he was made a quickening Spirit. From the first Adam by natural generation and propagation, we receive corruption for corruption; so from the second Adam, we receive grace for grace.

1 Cor. 15. 45.

1 Use of this Doctrine is for confutation,

1 Of the Socinians error, who say that all grace in Christ, whether his active or passive righteousness, was only to qualify his person. and to merit his own glorification without any reference unto us, unlesse as an exemplar or paterne. But this opinion is sufficiently confuted by this Doctrine, by which hath been shewn, that as all our grace is from Christ; so that abundance of grace that is in Christ is for us: As the woman hath abundance of milk in her brest, not for her self, but for her child; and the Sun hath abundance of light, not for it self, but for the world: So Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth, but this fulnesse is in order to the filling of his members. As in the natural body there are some special parts, that do stand as officers unto all the rest. The stomach receives much meat, not for it self, but that it might communicate it to all the members. The head hath the senses seated in it, not for it self, but for the whole body: So it is in the mystical body, whereof Christ is the head. The abundance of grace, which is treasured up in Christ, is in order to supply every member with grace, *For their sakes* (saith Christ himself of his Elect,) *I sanctifie my self, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* Some do refer this to Christ, being set apart to the Office of Mediator, that it was not for his own sake, but for the sake of his members; and though there be grace enough in Christ to qualify his person, yet also there is grace enough in him to justify our persons too, and sanctifie our natures.

Iob 17. 19.

2 This also reproves the error, pride and folly of the Pelagians, Papists and Arminians, who derogate from God, and arrogate to themselves. These people like *Sampson*, have lost their spiritual strength, but do not, will not know that it is departed from them. They are poor, and yet are proud, and while they are setting up the praise of nature, they do prove themselves the enemies of grace. Alas, while they boast of a *liberum arbitrium*, they have cause to bewail a *servum arbitrium*, as *Luther* call's it. It is true, man by the fall did not lose the faculty it self, but he hath lost the rectitude of it. And yet proud man will be like the spider, spinning out a thread of his own, and thinking to climbe up to heaven by threads spun out of his own bowels: but let such who rejoyce in this *Mibi*

*Sub laudibus  
naturae laet  
inimici gratiae,  
August.*



Iob 8.14.

*soli deo*, take heed at last that his hope be not cut off, and that his trust become like a spiders web. Alas poor proud wretch! who made thee to differ? *Gravinculus* the Arminian makes this proud answer to the Apostles question, *I my self made my selfe to differ*. This is Divinity much like that of the Heathens; *Seneca* said, *That we live, this is of God; but that we live well, that is of our selves*. And *Cicero* hath also this saying, and he tells us, it is the judgement of all men, *That prosperity and successe is from God, and must be sought of God, but wisdom, that is gotten by our selves*; which gave *Augustine* occasion to passe this censure upon him: *Cicero in endeavouring to make men free, he made them sacrilegious*. But let us take heed of this proud leaven of Arminianism, & learn from hence to be convinced of the emptinesse and insufficiency of our nature to any supernatural good. For alas! *We are not sufficient of our selves, to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiencie is of God*. We have no grace but what we receive from Christ: *And grace is no way free, unlesse it be every way free*. We have little reason to boast of the freedom of our will to any thing that is spiritually good, because our will is not free, till it be by grace made free, We have no power to become the sons of God, till it be given us to believe on his Name: and such are born, not of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

*Voluntas libera liberata,*  
August.

2 TIM.



## 2 TIM. 2.1.

*Be strong in the grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.*

**R**om the last clause in this text, *viz. Grace that is in Christ Jesus*, we have gathered this Observation, that  
*All those measures of grace, whereof believers are partakers, they do receive them in and from Jesus Christ.*

That this is so we have proved, not only by the types of the Old Testament, but also by the expresse testimony of the New Testament, and have also given the grounds and reasons of this point, with some Application, by way of reproof and confutation of the Arminian and Socinian errors. It remains we make some further Application of this point, and so conclude the whole discourse.

2 Use is by way of exhortation unto these duties following.

1 Dost thou receive all thy grace from Jesus Christ? then labour to be humble in the acknowledgment of this. Let the consideration and conscientious application of this Doctrine, quell all boasting in us of any excellency received. *Our wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, are all from Christ, and therefore, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* Consider, who

Sermon 15.  
 At Lawrence  
 Fury, London.  
 April 27, 1691.  
 This was the  
 last LORD'S  
 Day that ever  
 Master Love  
 preached.

1 Cor. 1.30,31.

1 Cor. 4.7.

2 Cor. 10. 15, 16

Ego & Deus  
mens.  
Rom. 3. 27.

2 Kings 6. 5.  
Cant. 6. 10.  
Lucem accep-  
tam vero.

4 Chron. 29. 10.  
11, 12, 13, 15,  
16.

maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? Who but a proud fool would magnifie himself in that, which either another giveth him, or another hath done for him? We count it an odious pride and folly in a man to boast himself of that which another hath done. And therefore the Apostle professeth, that he did not carry himself as those false teachers had done, who were crept into the Church of Corinth, saith the Apostle, *We do not boast of things beyond our measure, that is, of other mens labours, nor boast in another mans line of things made ready to our hand. Now all grace is made ready to our hands, and is only the work of Jesus Christ in us, who worketh all our works for us.* Ammiannus Marcellinus tells us of one Lampadius, a great person in Rome, who in all parts of the City, where other men had bestowed cost in building, he would set up his own Name, not as a Repairer of the work, but as the chief Builder. Such folly are they guilty of, who will set their own names before Gods over the work of grace in their own souls. *Oh remember that boasting is excluded by the law of faith.* Faith is that grace, which emptieth the creature of all its conceited excellencies, & faith is that grace which will give God the praise of the glory of all his grace. Shall the Groom of the Stable boast of his Masters horses? and the Stage-player of his borrowed Robes? Shall the mud wall be proud that the Sun shines upon it? We must say of all the good that is in us, as the young man said to the Prophet of his Hatcher, *Alas Master, it was borrowed.* The Church of God is compared to the Moon. Now all the light which the Moon giveth to the World, she doth but distribute what is lent her; all our graces and the shining of them, whereby our light is seen before men, is but a borrowed light from the Sun of righteousness. David sets us an excellent pattern, when he makes that humble acknowledgment: *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine (O Lord) is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in Heaven, or in earth is thine; thine is the Kingdom (O Lord) and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all: and in thy hand is power and might, and in thy hand is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious Name. But who am I, and*

what is my people, that we should offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee: O Lord, our God: all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy Name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own; which is an excellent pattern of humility after enlargement in duty. David and the people had offered both bountifully and willingly towards the House of God; the Lord had enlarged both their hearts & their hands. Now all they did for God, is here ascribed to Gods grace & bounty towards them. It is excellent humility to ascribe our enlargement in Gods service, to the enlargement of Gods grace towards us; the way to have grace increased, is humbly to acknowledge from whence we receive every grace.

2 Ascribe unto Jesus Christ the glory of all the grace you have been made partakers of. Thus did Paul upon all occasions, I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me, and by the grace of God I am what I am. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. It was well done of that good and faithful servant to say, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounas; he doth not say, Lord, my pains, but thy pound hath gained. When we give God the glory of his grace, God will give us the comfort & increase of our grace. Learn therefore to ascribe unto Christ, the initial, progressive, & consummative work of grace in our souls. Jesus Christ only, who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until his own day. Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the Alpha and the Omega. And therefore the Apostle prays, The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you. Grace is rather like Manna that comes from Heaven then the Corn that grows out of the earth. Grace is inspired from heaven. Gifts & parts are acquired by industry & pains here on earth. What God said by way of comparison between Canaan and Egypt, is very applicable to this purpose. For thus the Lord speaks to Israel, The land whither thou goest into possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, whence thou comest out, where thou sowest thy seed, and waterest it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs, but as the land whither ye go to possess it is a land of hills & valleys. & drink the water

1 Cor. 15. 10.

Gal. 2. 20.

Luke 19. 16.

Phil. 1. 6.

Heb. 12. 2.

Revel. 1. 8.

1 Pet. 5. 10.

Deut. 11. 10.  
11. 12.

Amos 4.7.

of the rain of Heaven, a Land which the Lord thy God careth for. Thus it is with grace and nature; nature may be and is improved with industry and pains, and is like Egypt, which might be watered by the foot, i. e. with digging gutters and trenches, which is the labour of the foot, to let in the streams of the river of Nilus, when he yearly overflows his banks, but grace is like the rain from Heaven; which only falleth where God doth appoint: *Who causeth it to rain upon one City, and not upon another, and one piece is rained upon, and the piece whereupon it raineth not, withereth.*

Hosca 14.8.

Rom. 11.18.

3 Disclaim all merit and self-sufficiency; for so much as we arrogate to our own merit, so much we derogate from the free grace and mercy of God. If with Ephraim God hath enlarged his grace towards thee, that thou art like a green fig-tree, yet let God have the glory of all thy fruitfulness, and let him say, *From me is thy fruit found.* Oh consider, That thou bearest not the root, but she root thee. Say, *Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy Name do we give the praise.* A gracious heart knows his own inability, and his own insufficiency and imperfection, that he is unable to overcome the least sin, though never so small; to exercise any grace, though never so weak; to perform the least duty, though never so easie; and as we have cause to acknowledge our inability, so also our sinful imperfections; if God should enter into judgement with us, he might condemn us, not only for our worst sins, but for our best duties.

Heb. 12.2.

ἀποστρέψαι

2 Chron. 30.13

4 Have an eie to Jesus Christ; Look up to him the author and finisher of our faith. The word looking unto, signifies in the original, such a looking unto, as that we look off those things which may divert our looking up to Jesus. Labour (my beloved) to look still unto Christ as the author of grace, when you have the greatest exercise, or increase, or comfort of your grace. Say when thou hast the greatest strength of grace, as *Ishobabab* did, when he had that great strength of men, five hundred thousand: *Lord, we know not what to do, only our eyes are upon thee.* There are these three things which we should eie in Christs giving us grace.

I How voluntarily and freely Jesus Christ doth issue out his grace to his people. Never did a mother more willingly give her childe-suck, when her breasts did ake and were ready to break, then



then Jesus Christ doth bestow grace upon his people: Christ doth not like a Merchant sell his grace, but like a King freely bestows all: see the tenour of the covenant of grace how free it was. *He, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;* nothing is so free as grace: it is offered and is bestowed upon the freest terms imaginable: All that Christ requires, is but our receiving it. It is the delight of Christ to shew mercy, and bestow grace upon his people. It is the meat of Christ to do the will of God that sent him, and to finish his work. Never was man more willing to eat his meat when he is hungry, then Jesus Christ was to do good, and bestow grace upon them that wanted it. So also it is said of Christ in *Psal. 72.* (which is clearly a prophetic of Jesus Christ) *that he should come down like rain upon the mowen grasse, and as show-ers that water the earth.* Now there is nothing comes down more sweetly and freely then the rain upon a dry and thirsty ground.

Isa. 55. 1.

Revel. 22. 17.

Prov. 8. 31.  
John 4. 34.

Psal. 72. 6.

II Secondly, look unto Jesus the Authour of grace, how irresistibly he doth communicate his grace. *I will work, and who can let it?* It's true, not only of Gods external deliverances, but is as true of Gods working grace in the hearts of his people. *Who shall let?*

Ia. 43. 13.

I Satan shall not, for though he be a strong man, and armed, and hath got possession, yet when Christ comes he is *stronger* than Satan.

2 Sin shall not be able to hinder Gods work of grace. Grace shall be too hard for the strongest opposition, that is made against it. It is true, a man may and doth resist the grace of God, with a gain-saying and contradicting resistance, but not with an overcoming resistance.

III Thirdly, look up to Jesus the bestower of grace, how proportionably he gives grace suitable, and answerable to thy temptations and need. *God divides to every one his grace and gifts, severally as he will,* and yet he gives grace that shall be enough.

I Cor. 12. 11.

My

Cor. 12. 9.

*My grace is sufficient for thee*, said God to Paul : sufficient to quell corruptions, sufficient to repel temptation, sufficient to make thee wait upon me, till I give thee deliverance.

Phil. 4. 19.

ἢ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

5 Be exhorted to have recourse to Jesus Christ for supply of grace. Go to Jesus, and by the prayer of faith approach to the Throne of grace, and beg grace to help thee in time of need. Go unto God by Christ, and God through Christ will supply all your wants. *My God*, saith Paul to the Philippians, *shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ*. Go to this God, and express your selves before his throne, with sensible complaints, and earnest requests; say, Lord, seeing there is so much water in the fountain, why should my cistern be empty? such fulness of grace in Christ, and so little grace in my heart? Lord, hast thou not gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, and that's the worst that can be said of me; & hast thou not a blessing for me also?

Psal. 58. 18.

3 Use of Caution; though we say that all grace is and from Christ, yet

I Cant.

1 This should not cut off our endeavours after grace; we should so earnestly labour to get grace, as if there were no way to have it but by our endeavours; we should so strive to get Heaven, as if it were to be gotten by our fingers, by our own pains. Gods promises and purposes of giving grace, should rather quicken, and greaten, then any wayes slacken our endeavours after grace. See how the Apostle makes Gods working grace in us, a ground why we should work: *Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will & to do of his good pleasure*. And again, *I know the thoughts that I think towards you* (saith the Lord) *thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end*; but see also how God joyns their duty with his promise, the means unto the end: *Then shall ye call upon me, & ye shall go, & pray unto me, & I will hearken unto you*. So also in the Prophecies of Ezekiel, the Lord had promised to do great things for them, & then adds, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them*. Gods promise to David to build him an house, did not at all slack his prayer to God for that purpose; for thus we finde David praying, *I bow, O my God,*

Phil. 2. 12, 13.

Ier. 29. 11, 12.

Ezek. 36. 37.

God, hast told thy servant, that thou wilt build him an house, therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before thee. And now Lord, (thou art God, and hast promised this goodness to thy servant) now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever, for thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed for ever. Thus also did Paul, By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me. See how he joynts Gods grace and his own endeavours together. Thou must then so endeavour after grace, as if it were to be gotten by labour, and not bestowed by favour; yet when thou hast done all thou canst, thou must acknowledge grace to be free, as if thou hadst not laboured at all.

1 Chron. 17.  
25, 26, 27.

1 Cor. 15. 10.

2 Cant.

Col. 2. 9.

Iohn 1. 12. 16.  
compared.

Iohn 15. 5.  
Χωρίς ἡμῶν  
Rom. 6. 5.

2 Though there be abundance of grace in Christ, yet let all such as have no interest in Christ, take heed how they flatter themselves into a conceit, that they shall receive grace from Christ. Interest in the person gives communication of his grace. As it was in Christs person, he could not have had those excellencies and attributes which were in God, had not his two natures humane and divine been personally united in him. And therefore it is said by vertue of the hypostatical union, that in him, i.e. in his person dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. So unless there be that mystical union between Christ & us, we could not be partakers, nor grow strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Union is the ground of Communion, & therefore we read first of receiving Christ, and then afterwards of receiving of his fulness grace for grace. I though thou art next Christ by profession, yet if thou art not one with Christ by faith, thou canst not receive any vertue from him. If a man tie food to any part of his body, it will not nourish him, because it is not received, concocted or concorporated; that only nourishes, which becomes one & the same substance with us. So we receive strength & increase of grace from Christ, as we are united to him by faith. Take a graft & tie it to a tree, & it brings forth no fruit; but let it be united to a tree by implatation, then the graft grows fruitful: so without Christ (or as it is in the original) *separate from Christ you can do nothing*. He that by faith is not planted together in the likeness of Christs death, shall never receive spiritual nourishment from him. He that doth not

John 15.6.

ܐܢܬܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ

ܕܥܝܢܐ.

not abide in Christ, is cast forth *as a Branch*, he was never a true Branch, only seemed to be one. Christ is a fountain of grace, but it is faith that draws out of this fountain. Christ is a treasury of grace, but it is faith that unlocks this treasury. By our communion with Christ we receive grace for grace. We are made by love, meeknesse and patience like unto Christ, but by faith we are made one with Christ; and that Union is the cause of Communion, and therefore Christlesse persons are gracelesse persons.

3 Cant.

3 If men want grace, yet let them know, that not Christ but themselves are to be blamed. There is fulnesse in Christ, there is grace enough in Christ, in him there is fulnesse of sufficiency, of efficiency, and of redundancy; but if a vessel be stopt, cast it into the Sea, and it will receive no water; and the fault is in the vessel which is stopt, there is no want of water in the Sea. They that have the River-water or Conduit-water come into their houses, if no water come, you must not conclude there is no water in the river or fountain, but that the Pipes are either stopt or broken: So it is if ever you are straitened, you are straitened in your own bowels, and not straitened in your God. If a house be dark, it is not for any want of light in the Sun, but for want of windowes in the house: So if thou wantest grace, it is not for want of grace in Christ, but for want of faith in thy soul, to draw and derive more grace from Christ.

4 Cant.

Marth. 20. 15. v

4 Envy not the grace of God in others. Though Christ should bestow more grace on others then on thee, yet thy eye must not be evil, because his is good. Thou should'st not have an envious eye, because Christ hath a bountifull hand. It is not only a fault in wicked men, to envy the grace that is in good men, as Cain envied Abel, because his sacrifice was accepted, and his own rejected, but also good men are too apt to envie one another. Josephs brethren envied their brother, because he was beloved of his father; and Peter (it is thought) envied John the beloved disciple. But take heed of envy, it's dishonourable to God, and often hinders us from receiving mercy and grace from God. To envy Christs dispensing of his grace, to whom and in what measure he pleases, is unbecomming a Christian; to rejoyce in others happiness, is to do as the Angels of Heaven; to envy others good is like the Devils

vils

Ioh. 21. 20. 21.

vils in hell. Would a father take it well that his children fall out about their portions, which their father hath given them. God is absolutely free, to give one, or two, or five talents, as he pleases, and if another have more grace than thou, yet be thankful for that grace thou hast, and envy no man,

Lastly, lessen not that grace thou hast received. As there is no sin small, because it is an offence against the great God: so there is no grace little, because it comes from the great God. Unthankfulness hinders this oil from running. As a man must not be contented with the greatest measure of grace, so he must not be unthankful for the least measure of grace. Consider, it is Jesus Christ that hath begun the work of grace: that there is *some little good wrought in thee*, is the work of Jesus Christ; and he that hath begun a good work; will also finish it; he that hath given grace a *being in thy soul, will also strengthen thee with strength in thy soul, and perfect what concerneth thee.* Do not thou thy self quench the flax that begins to smoke, nor break the reed that is bruised; but be thankful to Christ that hath kindled this smoking flax, and wait upon him; who will so accomplish his work, that he will send forth judgement unto victory.

5 Cant. \*

Psal. 138. 3, 8.

Matth. 12. 20.

. T

JOB





Job 30.23.

*For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.*

*A Funeral Sermon preached by Mr. Love, at the Funeral of Mistress B. at Lawrence Jury, London. April 29, 1651. Being the last Sermon that ever he preached.*  
Verse 18.

**I**N the handling of these words 'tis needful I should dispatch these two things.

- 1 Give you the scope.
- 2 The sense of the words.

For the first, the scope of the words, because they are usher'd in with an illative or causal particle (*For*) which carries a reference to somewhat that goeth before, and that you may distinctly take notice of the reference, you must look back to the 18 Verse of this Chapter, there *Job* tells you of a strong disease under which he laboured: *By the great force of my disease is my garment changed, it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat. It seems the disease was so strong upon him, it even strangled his breath, it was as a collar about his neck; upon the sense of this his disease, he breaks out into this holy meditation, For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living. Now take a hint from the scope and context, that sicknesses and diseases they should be remembrancers of us about our dying: Sick men should always think with themselves they are dying men, and they that die daily, need not fear dying suddenly. So I come to the sense of the words, I know. It is not to be understood of a notionall or speculative knowledge, that doth signifie a bare and naked knowledge of a general truth; but such kinde of knowledge as is practical and experimental: and so also doth *Junius* translate it. This experimental knowledge wrought in*  
*Job.*

*Non solum rem notam, sed quasi peculiari experientia sibi persuasam significat. Pined.*

*Job* holy preparations for death. I know, and by experience can tell, I have such a kinde of knowledg, that hath practicalnesse and experience in it. (*I hat thou wilt bring me to death.*) This shewed the holinesse of *Job*, in opposition to the doctrine of the Heathens, who guest that all such events fell out by fate and fortune, and not by the determinate decree and counsel of the most High. (*And to the house appointed for all living.*) Though he doth not speak here where this house is, yet he doth in *Job* 17.13. *If I wait, the grave is mine house, and I have made my bed in the darknes.* Now that which was his house, must be the house of all living, that is, the grave. Now the grave is compared to an house:

Exterior. Jun.

Job 17.13.

1 Alluding to the Egyptian Sepulchres, which were made like a house with several arched rooms.

2 Because there we dwell in silence. Thus ye have the words briefly paraphrazed unto you. Now I shall give you some practical deduction from them, *For I know that thou wilt bring me to death.* These words are the gracious speech of *Job* touching his own mortality; and in them we have three particulars:

1 The Rationality of this speech. He brings it in with an illative, *For*.

2 The Particularity of it. He draws a particular meditation of death, &c. *Me*.

3 The piety of it, he acknowledges Gods hand in bringing him to death. *Thou*, and not chance or fortune.

For the first, the Rationality of it. Holy *Job* doth not speak of his death without some cause, but for the ground and reason foregoing, *By the great force of my disease is my garment changed, it bindes me about as the collar of my coat;* and then he breaks out into this holy meditation. *For I know thou wilt bring me to death.* From thence observe,

*That it is a very rational thing, in weaknes to have holy meditations about death.* *Job* lay under a disease, that even was ready to choak and strangle him, and then he breaks out into this holy meditation, *For I know thou wilt bring me to death, &c.* It is observable, the Ancients take notice that *David* made three Psalms, when he lay upon his sick bed, *Psal.* 6. *Psal.* 30. *Psalme* 39. and in all those Psalms there are divine raptures and holy meditations about death. *Job*

T. 1.

17.1. *My breath is corrupt, my dayes are extinct, the grave is ready for me.* He doth not mean an ill favour in his breath, but it was an obstruction and stopping in his breath, that is, he was *short-breath'd, and strained under a violent disease.* It is conceived that Job had that disease which is called the Tiflick, and the consideration of this disease, made him think that the grave was ready for him. So *Heman* lay under a violent disease, *Psal. 88. 3, 4, 5. For my soul is full of trouble, and my life draws nigh to the grave. I am accounted with them that go down into the pit, I am as a man that hath no strength, free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou numbrest no more, and they are cut off from thy hands.* When sickness is in the chamber, then death is at the window. Diseases are but the messengers, harbingers and fore-runners of death; in the Prophets phrase, *Death is come up into our windows.* When diseases are in the house, then death is at the threshold. So Job reckoneth, *When I lie down, I say, When shall I rise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro, unto the dawning of the day; and then he saith, My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust. My skin is broken, and become leath'om.*

*Psal. 88. 3, 4, 5.*

*Ier. 9. 21.*

*Lob 7. 4, 5.*

*Use 1.*

First Use, is to condemn those, that when they lie on a sick bed, they hope for life, but never think of death, their own guiltinesse and their own wickednesse of living doth so fill them with fear and horreur, that the thoughts of death is irksome and tedious to them. Just like *Lewis* the eleventh King of *France*, when he lay sick of a dangerous disease, he charged his servants and attendants, that they should not speak of death in his hearing. Many mens bodies are Magazines and Hospitals of diseases; who when they are living never think of death, though there is but little betwixt them and the grave.

*2 Use.*

Second Use, is to those that are healthful and strong; 'tis true, diseases are the immediate harbingers and fore-runners of death in an ordinary way, yet you may soon die though a disease seize not on you. As the fruits of a tree do more perish by extraordinary windes and tempests, then do stay upon the tree, and are gathered by the husbandman: So violent diseases may soon kill you, though marrow be in your bones, and strength in your joynts. *Paracelsus* a skilful Physician, he gloried, that if any man

would

would follow his Physical Prescriptions, he should not die any violent death, but merely through age, and yet that boasting man, before he was forty yeers of age; he himself died of a Fever. Thus I have done with the first consideration, the Reasonablenesse of this Speech; I am under a sore disease, and therefore I do think of death.

Secondly, the Particularity of *Jobs* speech is to be observed. *Job* doth not stand upon that general Conclusion, *There is no man that liveth, but he shall see death*, *Psal.* 88. 48. He doth not speak in general so, but *I know I must die*. From thence observe this Point.

*That general Conclusions about death, should be enforced upon the soul by particular applications.* Beloved, we should not only have general notions and empty speculations about death, but practical and particular conclusions concerning our death, such as may lay an awe upon the conscience. Thus in the case of the godly, said *Eliphaz*, *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a stock of corn cometh in his season*; and then he adds, *Verse* 27. *Lo, this, we have searched it, hear it, and know thou it for thy good.* Generall Conclusions that all must die, must be enforced upon the soul with particular Applications, to turn you from the World, to beget in you serious thoughts touching your future and eternal welfare.

2 Doct.

*Iob* 5. 26, 27.

General truths do not carry that force upon the conscience, unlesse they are drawn by applicative inference; and therefore, *Psal* 73. ult. the Psalmist saith not only, *It is good to draw neer unto God*, but, *it is good for me*.

The third particular, is the piety of *Jobs* speech in these words, *Thou wilt bring me to death*. Now there are three particulars in it, which note *Jobs* Faith and Piety.

1 He doth not ascribe dying to fate and fortune, but to the Providence of the most High. From thence observe,

*That it is the property of the godly, to see Gods hand in taking away men by death.* It was but dotage of the Heathen that knew not God, to ascribe events to blinde fortune; and it was the corruption of the *Chaldeans* to overlook the Deity in all fatal events; Yet *Job* he desired to see and submit to death, and to Gods hand

3 Doct.

hand in bringing it upon him. *Thou wilt bring me to death.* Another thing observable is this, *I know thou wilt bring me to death.* It is not a notional and bare knowledge of the understanding, but such a kinde of knowledge that is considerate and practical, which works upon the affections. From thence observe,

Deut. 4.

*That though all men do know notionally they must die, yet only godly men know it practically and considerately.* To know practically of your dying, consider before-hand, how shall I do to launch into the eternal gulf? what shall become of me in another World, when I leave this? Is my peace made with God? Is my person justified? Am I in a state of grace? Now *Jobs* speech hath latitude in it, *I know thou wilt bring me to death*, that is, I do so know it, that I will provide for it, and I will prepare for it, and I will lay a foundation for eternal life. *Solomon* speaking of Funerall solemnity, saith he, *It is better to go to the house of mourning, then to go to the house of feasting; that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart.* I but all men they do not lay death to heart, they may perhaps talk of death at a Funeral, but the living they shall lay it to heart, *lay it upon the heart*, as the Hebrew, they shall lay it to heart, and lay it upon their hearts, so *Tremelius*. A wicked man lays it upon his tongue, but a godly man lays this truth upon his heart. There is none but a godly man, that so knows any thing of dying, as to know it so practically, affectionately and considerately, and so as to do these three things.

1 None but a godly man considers of his dying, that he dies deservedly, he tastes the bitterneffe, and feels the burden of sin, in his diseases and sense of approaching death, he considers with himself, that it is not a disease that will bring him to his grave, but the sins of his life that kill him.

2 None knows that he must die so as a godly man, whose care it is to die preparedly. A godly man knows he must die, and this knowledge makes him prepare for a dying time, to live every day as his last day. The Prophet he spoke of death in the former part of *Psal 90.* that the dayes of man are threescore and ten. See what follows, *So teach unto number our dayes, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom;* he doth mean by numbring our dayes, to live so

Eccle. 7. 2.

יחן אל לבו

*Dabit ad Cor  
suum. Arias  
Mont.*

*Inditurnus est  
illud animo  
suo. Tremel.*

*Psal 90. 1, 12.*



so exactly, as to count the number of our dayes to be so few, every day, as if this were the last day. And this time as the time of the coming of Christ to judgement.

3 None but a godly man knows of his dying, so as to consider that there is a necessity that sin must die in him before his body dies. Seneca an Heathen could say, *Let thy vices die before thee*. There must not be only a suspension, but a mortification of sin. A godly man considers, though I live blamelessly, yet I must have my inward lusts and corruptions die before my body die; and therefore they ought to be conversant in things that tend to mortification: this is to know death considerably and affectionately; whereas wicked men consider of death notionally, their senses tell them that all must die. They say all men, young and old, rich and poor must die; but this is but matter of discourse in them, but the godly know it with savoury knowledge.

Thirdly, *Jobs* piety was, in that he doth represent death to himself, not in a formidable and dreadful way, but under a comfortable representation; *For I know thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house, &c.* He doth represent the grave under the notion of a house, as he represents it elsewhere. From thence observe this point,

*That a childe of God that hath not allowed guilt upon his conscience, he may and ought to represent death to himself in such familiar representations, as may make it less dreadful and more desirable.* Sometimes it is represented as going to bed, *They shall rest in their bed*. A godly man when he lieth upon his death-bed, and by sickness is weary of his life, tossing to and fro till the dawning of the day, let him think the grave will be but a bed of rest unto him; so death is often stiled a sleep: *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* Death is embalmed with sweet and comfortable language.

*The grave is the house for all the living to be lodged in. If I wait, the grave is mine house, I have made my bed in the darkness. The grave is the house that I must go to, as after a hard dayes labour in my house I go to bed in a dark night. So we go to our beds,*

*Moriantur ante te vitia, Sen.*

*Doct. 5.*

*Isa. 57. 2.*

*Dan. 12. 2.*

*Doct. 6.  
Job 17. 13.*

as into our graves for a long night; going to bed is but for a short night, but going to the grave is for a long night; death is sometimes represented with dreadful considerations, but with amiable-nesse too. There is an abhorrency in nature against death, it is balm'd by Jesus Christ; he lay in the grave three days, to embalm the grave to you; though your beds be clondy and dark, yet ye rest in them till the Resurrection-day. For the opening of the doctrine,

I shall dispatch these two Queries.

1 I shall shew you, why the grave is compared to an house.

2 I shall shew you, what kinde of house the grave is.

*Query 1.*

For the first Query, why the grave is compared to an house?

1 This Reason some Authours give; because in ancient times, (as hath been hinted) among the Egyptians their graves and sepulchres, they were made after the fashion of houses, with arches, and such kinde of superstructures; therefore they say it is called an house.

2 Other Authours give this reason; because that as a man after a dayes labour abroad, he comes to his house for rest; so a man after a lifes labour in the world, he comes to his grave, as to house for rest.

*Query 2.*

The second Query is this, what kinde of house is the grave?

Now I will give you these four properties of this house.

1 It is a desolate and a lonesome house.

2 It is a dark house.

3 It is an old house.

4 It is a silent house. For the first, the grave is,

*Iob 3.14.*

1 A desolate and a lonesome house. I shall be, said Job, with Kings & Counsellours of the earth, which build desolate places for themselves; that is, they build tombes and monuments where they shall lie, and then they shall leave all their attendance. When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old with them that go down into the pit, that thou be not inhabited, Job 17.

*Ezek. 26.20.*

14. I have said to corruption, Thou art my Father, and to the wormes, Thou art my mother and my sister: there is all the company you will have, corruption and the wormes; friends bring you to your grave, and there they leave you.

2 Your

2 Your Grave is a dark house, *Job 17. 13. I have made my bed in the darknesss*, that is, in the grave. The grave is like the sleeping room in a house, not like the dining room and working room. The dining room is to be light, and so the working room, but the sleeping room is dark. 'Tis but the stopping of the mouth of the grave, and it is but the drawing of the Curtains of the Bed, where thou shalt lie in dark-till the Resurrection-day. In the Grave there is neither the light of the body, which is the eye; nor the light of the aire, which is the Sun: the Sun it shall not shine there, nor the bodie see there; therefore, *Ecclesiastes 11. 9. Rejoyce, Oh young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the dayes of thy youth, and walk in the wayes of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgement. And Verse 18. He had said remember the dayes of darknesss; for they shall be many.* The meaning is this, The continuance in the Grave, which is the house of darknesse, shall be long, even to the end of the World.

3 The Grave is an old house, as old as *Adam*, he digged his Grave with his own fingers; *Wherefore as by one man sin entred into the World, and by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* The Grave it is a lasting house, a house where thou must stay a great while. *Ecclesiastes 12. 5. Also when they shall be affraid of that which is high, and fear shall be in the way, and the Almond Tree shall flourish, and the Grassopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail, because man goeth to his long home, and the Musmers go about the streets.* 'Tis a long home, a kinde of a house of Eternity, a long while till Christs coming to judgement, our long home, in opposition to our present houses, that is, our short home. Your houses are your short homes, but the graves are your long homes.

Rom. 5. 12.

4 The grave is a silent house; *Psalm 31. 17. Let me not be ashamed, Oh Lord, for I have called upon thee; let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.* The Psalmist prays here for deliverance from his Persecutors, here is no-

Job 3.18.

thing but clamour, persecution and opposition, and one shall not have a good word from them. But as Job comforts himself in the grave, *There the Voice of the Oppressour shall not be heard*: So may we, we shall be at rest and silence there; there the weary shall be at rest, and there the Prisoners shall rest together. For the uses of this point.

The first Use, is an use of comfort to the godly, they may be comforted upon this Doctrine. This Doctrine is a Doctrine that is dreadfull to wicked men, their graves are dungeons to them; but to Gods children the grave is an house. Now you may be comforted upon these four considerations.

Job 3.13, 17.

1 That though the grave be an house, yet be comforted, it is a resting house, Job 3.17. *There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest.* He speaks here of the grave in vers. 13. *For now should I have lien still and been quiet. I should have slept, then had I been at rest.* There is no work to be done in this house, Eccles 9. 10. *Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest, Isa. 57. 2. They shall rest in their beds.*

1 Co. 15. 57.

2 That though the grave be an house, yet be comforted, it is but a sleeping-house, it is not a house where thou shalt be everlastingly. Beloved, though it be a house, yet it is but a sleeping-house; it shall not alwayes keep your bodies; that is the meaning of Pauls exultation: *Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?* He refers it to the Resurrection; the grave though it compasse us, yet it shall not conquer us:

3 Though the grave be an house, yet be comforted, it is but an hiding-house, such an house as is an hiding-place for Gods people, Job 14. 13. *Oh that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me in secret untill thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me.* Times may be so calamitous, that there may be more safety under ground then above ground; they that have layen a long time in their graves, may be more happy then those that

that are living, *Iſa. 26. 10.* Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and ſhut thy door about thee, hide thy ſelf, as if it were for a little moment untill the indignation be over-paſt. Though ſome refer this to a temporal deliverance, yet others refer it to the grave, where God lodges his children, when he takes them from the evil to come.

*Iſa. 26. 10.*

*Iſa. 57. 1.*

4 Though the grave be an houſe, yet be comforted, it is a perfumed houſe, a houſe imbalmed and perfumed by Chriſts lying in the grave. All the acts that Chriſt did, they were for our ſakes. Chriſt died to ſave us; by dying, Chriſt lay buried in the grave to make the grave a bed of reſt, he roſe again from the dead to ſanctifie our Reſurrection, and by his preſence there he hath perfumed this bed, this houſe, the grave.

Second Uſe for inſtruction. 1 Here is matter for meditation; when you are in your own houſes, bethink your ſelves thus, Now I am here walking in my houſe, from chamber to chamber, but ere long my chamber ſhall be in the duſt. Now I am coming to my bed in a dark night, but ere long God will put out the candle of my life, and will lay me in the grave, as in a bed of darkneſſe. Now I am in my own houſe, but ere long my houſe will caſt me out to my grave, and that is the houſe that will take me in.

2 Let it check in you all covetous & inordinate deſires after worldly things; Thou ſhalt come from lying in the dark houſe in the wombe, to lie in the dark houſe of the grave. Oh what a vaſt company of inordinate and luxurious deſires are there in the hearts of men. In the womb one foot, in the Cradle three foot will content you, and in the grave ſix foot; but when thou liveſt in the world a whole world will not content you; there is ſuch inordinate and luxurious deſires in mens hearts, when they have all affluence and confluence of creature-comforts: Now they muſt have their variety of houſes, a Country houſe, a Summer-houſe, a Winter-houſe; yet thou muſt exchange thy many houſes for one houſe. 'Tis worthy your notice, that paſſage you read of in Scripture, *1 Sam. 16. 24.* Samuel when he had anointed Saul King, and



*Elige ab his  
saxis ex quo in  
vicissime Caesar  
ipsetibi tumul-  
tum me fabri-  
care velis.*

the people had chosen him; what signal doth he give him to confirm him anointed, it was to go to *Rachel's Sepulchre*; now the reason is this, that he might not be glutted with the preferments and honours he was entering upon.

The Emperours of *Constantinople*, in their Inaugurations, on their Coronation-dayes, had a Mason came and shewed them several Marble-stones, and asked them to chuse which of those should be made ready for their Grave-stones. And so we read of *Joseph of Arimathea*, that he had his Tombe in his Garden, to check the pleasures of the place. Now in thy house thou hast superfluity and abundance. I can go now to variety of houses; but one day thou shalt leave all thy houses, and go to one house, and then leave all your company and your friends.

Object. 1.

But how can this be true, when the Scripture saith, *John 8, 51. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

Sol.

To this I answer, that this Scripture intends not a natural and corporal death, but a spiritual and eternal death, and it is laid, *John 11, 25, 26. I am the resurrection and the life. he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live, and whosoever loveth and believeth in me shall never die: that is, though he die naturally, yet he shall live eternally.*

Object. 2.

But you will say *Enoch was not buried, and Elijah was carried up in a chariot.*

Sol.

Particular examples do not frustrate general Rules; though they were not laid in their graves, yet they underwent something equivalent to death, there was a particular reason why God translates *Enoch* and *Elijah*, because they were to be types of Christ's Resurrection, and pledges of ours.

Object. 3.

But some will say, as in *1 Cor. 15, 51. We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed; therefore at the last day they shall not be buried, and the grave not the house of all men, but those that are then living shall be suddenly carried up to Heaven.*

Sol.

To this I answer, that at the last day, though men shall not come to the grave, yet they shall be taken up when the trumpet shall sound, and shall go through the fire, and they shall in their translation undergo something that shall be equivalent to a death, and to a burial.

2 Last-

2 Lastly, we are tied to this decree of death, though God be not tied, *Rom. 5. 14.* and *Rom. 9. 27.* By those places we are to understand, all men do deserve to die, though God may exempt some, as those that live to see the end of the World, from a death as ours is.

Death is the end of all men, and the Grave is the house appointed for all living. *Death hath passed upon all men, because all have sinned*; All deserve to die: and even those that are changed at the last day, undergo something equivalent to death it self.

*Rom. 5. 12.*  
*De jure mortis*  
*in omnes homi-*  
*nes loquitur A-*  
*postolus, licet*  
*Deus aliquos à*  
*morie possit ex-*  
*imere. River.*

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FINIS.

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14th, we are led to this doctrine of death, though God be not dead; Row 11. and Row 12. By these places we see how, though God be not dead, yet he is dead to the world, as those that were in the end of the world, from a death as ours is.

Death is the end of all men, and the Grave is the house of

rest for all living. Death hath said up, all men

shall be dead, as those that were in the end of the world,

as those that were in the end of the world,

as those that were in the end of the world,

as those that were in the end of the world,

as those that were in the end of the world,

Row 11.  
Row 12.  
Row 13.  
Row 14.  
Row 15.  
Row 16.  
Row 17.  
Row 18.  
Row 19.  
Row 20.



# A N ALPHABETICAL TABLE.

## A.

|          |   |  |
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| <b>A</b> | <i>Admiration of mens persons,</i><br><i>Affections rather then Actions evidence the truth of</i><br><i>grace,</i><br><i>Strong Assurance,</i><br><i>Strong Affections,</i><br><i>Why we should be carefull to preserve our first Affections,</i><br><i>Holy Affections arguments of grace,</i><br><i>Our All must be ascribed to Christ,</i> | Page 15.<br>39<br>18<br>69, 70<br>87<br>110<br>131 |
|----------|---|--|

## B.

|          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
| <b>B</b> | <i>Bad company a snare,</i><br><i>Good in Bad places commendable,</i><br><i>Misery to live in Bad places,</i><br><i>We must shun Bad company and places,</i><br><i>Against Boasting of our own merit,</i><br><i>None Blameable but our selves, if we want grace.</i> | 8<br>1b.<br>9<br>10<br>130, 132<br>136<br>Good |
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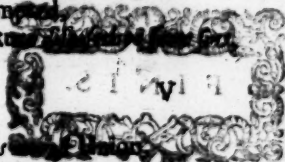
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